

LIFE OF SAI BABA

VOLUME II

BY PUJYASRI H.H.NARASIMHA SWAMIJI

PART II

I Mahlsapathy

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Foreword to Part II

BY

Sri B.N. Dattar. Home Minister, Govt. of India

H.H.B.V. Narsimha Swamiji, the Founder-President of the All India Sai Samaj, Madras, has requested me to write a foreword to this very interesting publication on Shri Sai Baba's Apostles and Mission. I gladly do so in my personal capacity for a variety of reasons.

In the first place, I myself have been under the guidance of the Saint of Shirdi for the last 18 years. In a way, Swamiji has been responsible for rousing in me a desire to know Shri Sai Baba and to seek His Grace. It was in or about 1937 while both of us had been at the Ramanashrama at Tiruvannamalai that I came to know that Swamiji had visited Shirdi and had been trying hard to collect material for a detailed study of the mysteries of the manifold life of this great saint. It was my conversation with him that enkindled in me a great curiosity to visit Shirdi and to seek His Blessings. I did so early in 1938, and have since then been visiting it off and on.

I have read, amongst others, all the publications of Swamiji on Shri Sai Baba and the experiences of His direct disciples.

To my good fortune, we have ever been in touch with each other. I have learnt not merely to respect but to revere Swamiji for the selfless and enthusiastic manner in which he has been working day and night during the last 20 years over the spread of the Divine Message of Shri Sai Baba. His missionary zeal in this cause has been to me a matter of deep spiritual gratification.

Swamiji has been ever in communion with the Saint and Mystic that Shri Sai Baba was, and, if I were to say so, Swamiji has been growing young in his advancing years, because of his complete dedication to the cause of Shri Sai Baba.

His writings are marked by a great critical and rational spirit that goes to the core of things without disturbing one's faith in and reverence for the things of the spirit. In fact, these feelings are strengthened thereby. That has always to be so if one were to know correctly and adequately the purpose behind the lives and the mission of such Avatars.

In an earlier publication on the life of Shri Sai Baba, Swamiji has, in a very erudite but entertaining manner, placed before us the fundamentals of our faith and spiritual traditions. One knows by his writings not only the salient features of the lives of great saints like Shri Ramana Maharshi and Shri Sai Baba, but also realises, as if by a God-given glimpse, the great purpose or purposes for which these high Souls descended to the earth and fulfilled in their own ways the Divine promise of maintaining righteousness in and uprooting wickedness from society. During the last 20 years, thanks to Swamiji's energetic propaganda and publicity, Shri Sai Baba has attracted devotees from far and near, as also from all sects, communities and religions. They come from all sections of the society and, in particular, from its intelligentsia. In the case of the latter, one has to carry them across the fields of doubt and scepticism before they reach the other shore of spiritual enlightenment, and are safely and for ever established on the bedrock of faith in and devotion to the Divinity that Shri Sai Baba was and is.

The present volume gives us a glimpse into the lives of the immediate and illustrious devotees and followers of Shri Sai Baba. They came from all faiths and while achieving blessedness and maintaining complete devotion to the Saint, ever remained enlightened members of their religions. Almost all of them had the good fortune of having known the Saint, at close quarters while He was living on this earth in flesh and blood.

It is to me, as it will be to other readers, a matter of great spiritual satisfaction to know how these direct disciples of the Saint came under His influence and protection and achieved blessedness.

Shri Sai Baba never believed in what can be called a formal initiation, I know, however, from the experiences of many including that of my humble self, that, in fact, there is such an initiation, though of an imperceptible but highly effective type. The moment you go under His influence you become a changed man and are ever convinced that all your burdens are borne by him, that you feel so light on account of His guidance, and that, at the same time, so purposefully united with Him, and through Him, with the Higher Forces that are working in the universe for the uplift of mankind.

I deem it a privilege to confess that I have learnt many new and stimulating things from a perusal of this great publication. It has in a way strengthened the impressions that I have formed from Gandhiji's writings on spiritual matters.

I, therefore, very gladly recommend this book to all those that seek Divine Light and guidance.

Om Tat Sat.

B.N. Datar.

Bihar Governor's Camp

To

B.V.N. Swami

Dear Friend,

I have your two letters from Madras and also the second volume of the Life of Sai Baba.

It is only recently that hagiology is being studied rationally and scientifically. Otherwise it was a matter of 'take it or leave it'. Those who had faith believed everything blindly. Those who were sceptic scoffed both at the faith and the object of faith.

Today, I think it would be unscientific to reject anything simply because it has not yet been explained or it is not obvious. Books such as 'Man the Unknown' by Dr. Alexis Carrel have opened the eyes even of the most critical people to the unknown powers that lie behind man's apparent consciousness.

From that point of view the publication of authentic lives and incidents that have taken place in connection with saints is a first step towards trying to understand the sources of saintly power and saintly achievement. The two volumes, therefore, on Shri Sai Baba should be welcomed by all those who are interested in "man the unknown".

Yours sincerely R.R. Diwakar

Preface to Part II

Sai Baba is indeed an ocean unfathomable and illimitable. One can pick up any direction and go as far as one likes and yet not exhaust Sai. As for the depth, human beings cannot get to the bottom of Sai either as to the number of his acts or to the extent to which they can be interpreted as benefiting humanity. Even the surface of the field or sea of Baba is absolutely uncharted. The human combination with the divine is unlimited and defies definition and description. No one is yet able to say what exactly are the origins of Baba, the early environment, and the early and later forces moulding the entity called Baba and resulting in the ultimate product now known to us as Sai Baba. An attempt has been made previously to describe his earlier origins and early influences, but such attempts must always remain very imperfect and superficial. Something has been said or written but when one goes through all the matter till now written, one still feels dissatisfaction because from any point of view, the matter given is certainly not sufficient and certainly not satisfactory. An attempt has however to be made to understand what we can pick out from what is available.

Baba's entire life, to say nothing of the beginnings, is shrouded in mystery. Nobody knew his father or grandfather or family or even to what community by birth he belonged. Some were so much staggered at this difficulty that they propounded a theory that Baba was "Ayonija" (not born of woman), that is as much as to say he was produced like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. But in modern days, people are not always prepared to accept "*Ayonijatva*" for any person they have seen. Baba himself has furnished particulars enough to explode the *Ayonija* theory, and hence an actual attempt has been made to explain what the heredity of Baba was and what the earliest environment and forces acting upon him were. In spite of the scarcity of material, an explanation has been given of how Baba grew up to be what he became in the strangest possible manner. Born of Brahmin parents of a very poor and pious sort, and having been handed over to a fakir for his sustenance and care at the very early age of one year or so, Baba seems to have been fitted by Providence to overcome all differences, especially differences of race, religion, creed, etc. The

fakir who took charge of him and kept him for five years seems to have been a very pious, real and loving fakir, and the impress of that fakir left on Baba is to further purify, and deify the pre-existing elements which may be supposed to be inherent in him, as a result of age-long growth (*Bahunam Janmanaam ante, Jnaanavan maam Prapadyate*). Differences between God and God, caste and caste, race and race could not possibly exist in that fakir's ideas and upbringing. But the essence of the fakir's training seems to have been the immersing entirely of the little Baba into the loving care of the fakir. To Baba, "that fakir" meant always the living God that looks after every one of us with equal mercy. That evidently represents or sums up the earliest span of life that Baba had. Providential arrangement for Baba has always been to promote the divine aim of his life, namely, the realisation that God is Love and Love is God, the unification of the different trends of Indian thought and life in matters of religion, etc. The fakir, who died when Baba was aged about five, directed his wife to take Baba to a great and pious Brahmin saint who was also a Prince, namely, Gopal Rao Deshmukh, Prince of Selu, who was at the same time a Prince of piety, a master of devotion, and "infused contemplation", one who had thoroughly identified himself with God in the form of Tirupati Venkatesa. This Gopal Rao, known as "Venkusa", because he was identified with Tirupati Venkatesa whom he worshipped, became the all-in-all of Sai Baba, the food giver, the soul giver, the Guru, the protector, the friend, and everything to Baba. Baba loved him with *ananya prema*, as the only thing he cared for and that love was fully responded to. '*Tvameva Sarvam Mamadeva deva*'. Such a person who was very broad and universal in his views, while deeply feeling the essence of God or religion within himself, naturally promoted Baba's peculiar way of looking at God as the one great beneficial, powerful loving father supporting all people equally with equal kindness. This was his Guru.

Providence again directing Baba's life cut short his novitiate under this princely Guru when he was just getting to be a man or major according to Indian ideas, that is, arriving at the age of 16. Baba had to part with him under peculiar circumstances. The parting was indeed painful, but it was a necessary part of

divine ordinance for Baba and for the country. Before parting, Baba was vested with all the powers as well as the piety of the Guru, and Baba thereafter passed into obscurity, became a fakir among fakirs, and had the apparently severe trial of having nothing to feed upon with no one to care for him. But really that was never the case. There was always God to look after him, and God always provided for all his needs, temporal and spiritual, both for body and soul. Vairagya and contentment, trust and calm, were the food for the soul; Baba got on and felt nothing was wanting. This training was a continuation of the two previous novitiates in order to ripen Baba for the great and grand work he had. We have faintly described this in previous publications. What now required to be done further about Baba to enable persons to understand Baba more fully is to set out his task of dealing with the world. For a fakir who was resting on God's care and getting on whether he got or did not get food or places for rest, no work or duty, according to ordinary spectators, existed or belonged to him. Yet the ways of providence are strange. It is this unconcerned fakir that must become the all-in-all of the entire world, certainly of the entire millions that came into contact and are coming into contact with him. How that happened or could happen is itself a very interesting chapter of Baba's biography.

Baba who did not care for anything had to be brought into contact with the devout and religious. There must be some devout and religious person first to pick him out, discover his inner worth and start his worship. Hence the development of Baba's work must start of with an account of how his worship started and later on how it spread, and still later what the mysterious ramifications and implications of this worship were. The person worshipped must be really God-like. Many a person is worshipped on account of certain social or other position or level but is unable to exert any divine influence upon the worshipper. In Baba's case, Providence ordained that the worship should be real and effective. The worshipper, if he intends to attract to himself the entire force and personality of the object worshipped, must be pure, sincere and earnest, must reach great heights of faith and surrender, and must lose himself, his individuality in the object of worship, till ultimately he becomes that. *Brahmavit*

Brahmaiva Bhavati (that is, the worshipper becomes the object of worship) is the aphorism that applies to the case. Such a worshipper was needed to draw Baba out of his cocoon.

Baba had by his previous training fully developed himself in self-realisation and God-realisation. His Guru had blotted out (see BCS 72A) his ideas that he was the body and made him realise that he was nothing but the soul, Paramatma or Parameswar. In Baba, this Parameswar essence of his began to beam out with increasing effulgence. The more he was worshipped, the more the divine in him beamed out, asserted itself and proved itself to be really divine. And the proof is still going on. So the next process or stage of Baba's biography must be the sketching of how the poor beginnings of worship by some one's lucky discovery of his merit let others to copy that example, and how, by observing the increased benefits flowing from such worship millions adopted that worship and began to yield themselves completely to the divine influence of the object worshipped so as to become not merely successful and happy in the world but also to become themselves expressions of love, the power of the inner Being of the entire Universe. Baba's nature or influence is simply indescribable, its extent and nature cannot easily be sketched out and the number of persons carrying on his worship now is beyond calculation. But in the beginning they were few and some of them could be called apostles. Therefore the stage has now been reached in Baba's biography for piecing out a few and terming them apostles of Baba and describing their work and also for describing the mission which Baba has and which Baba is increasingly manifesting. It is difficult to stop the sketching out of lives at any particular set of facts. But that difficulty has to be faced. So only just enough of the innumerable facets of Baba's life are pieced out here to present a rough outline or broad idea of Baba's apostles carrying out his mission, carrying on the work that Baba was intent upon. That being the object of this present volume, readers are requested to overlook the numerous defects in the presentation or other defects and to make the best of what is presented and putting their hearts into it, derive as much benefit as they can or as they care to.

A word or two will not be amiss here about the object of this work and the manner of approach. Previous works on Sai Baba have sometimes been taken up by readers or reviewers and approached in a spirit that might be considered natural but cannot be considered by the author as being the most proper or appropriate approach. A book on Sai Baba written by one who has drunk deep from the fountain of Sai's grace, wisdom and life must naturally have an abundant recognition of the place Sai fills up in one's life. Sai completely envelops the devoted sadhaka and leaves no part of him unaffected or uncovered. Therefore one might be under the impression that the life of Sai should deal with every possible point of view for a serious minded sadhaka. The fact however remains that many of our readers are not sadhakas at all nor sadhakas of the most earnest type. Some wish to get a cursory knowledge of a great saint whose name is heard here, there, and everywhere in this country especially. A sort of genteel curiosity, a desire to be acquainted with grand things, just to be acquainted, without any particular idea of being influenced thereby, is the outlook of many a reader. There is nothing to be said against that sort of approach, but a person who is in dead earnest about life, who has tasted the power of Sai to deal with the profoundest and deepest of life's problems cannot rest satisfied with that approach. A serious reader treats Sai as the Guru primarily and next as the all-in-all of himself and of every one who is prepared to surrender to him. Dealing with a Guru naturally necessitates the examination of the general principles governing gurus and Sai Baba, and the attempt at defining what the gurus and sishyas are and what their mutual relations should be. This naturally entails an examination of accepted authorities on this subject and free quotation from their dicta. Such quotations have not been particularly pleasing to certain readers, and one review pointed out that the interest in the book (meaning the story interest) was lost by what was considered to be an unnecessary intrusion of extraneous or foreign matter. But one, who resorts to a thorough study of a saint for the most complete assimilation of his (saint's) influence for the best effects in one's own life, would welcome such so-called digressions and episodes. A serious minded author has to keep in view all sets of

readers, especially the more serious readers who wish to get the greatest benefit out of the book.

A saint's life is the milk of ocean from which a few interesting bits of saintly biography, a collection of apothegms, counsels, reflections and other miscellaneous items might be extracted. But the main interest is still the milk of ocean which will yield an infinite and inexhaustible supply of divine nectar. One important truth that has been gaining strength in the author's mind, as he studied more and more of Baba and came more and more fully into contact with him, is the fact that entire portions of serious scriptures already studied by him or are still being studied by him are covered up by the saint's life, his leelas, his sayings, etc. The essentials of the Bhagavad Gita for instance, which has always been regarded as a valuable religious mine, were and are found to be nothing but the embodiment of what is contained in Sri Sai's life. Sri Krishna and Jesus Christ are better understood after studying Sai Baba's life than without such study. Interpretations of what is found in the Bible and in the Gita occur to one as one deals with Sai Baba and as one goes on surrendering to Sai Baba's influence and seeing what happens. It is no exaggeration to say that without the fleshy embodiment of religion in the life and activities of Sai and kindred saints, religion would be a dead mass of writings or thoughts and would leave humanity cold and helplessly struggling in the mire of darkness and ignorance. Sri Krishna is not usually understood by a person who merely reads the Gita, Mahabharata, or the Bhagavata. What Sri Krishna was and what he said puzzled this author and puzzled so many other persons, and, after seeing what Sai Baba said and did, all these puzzles disappeared, and clear light dawned upon everyone. When Sai said, 'I am Sri Krishna, I am Lakshminarayan, I am Vittal, I am Allah, I am God', etc., a moslem reader of Sai Baba's Gospel declared Baba a madman, but to the author and kindred spirits, dicta like these found in our ancient scriptures began to produce a clearer impression on the hearts. '*Aham Brahmasmi*' sounds most queer at first. But Sai's life shows what '*Aham Brahmasmi*' or '*Maim Allah hum*' means and how one can have that feeling and yet live amongst fellow creatures. The description given of a perfectly realised Brahma Jnani or Iswara Bhakta

found in the Bhagavad Gita and other sources is found to apply word for word, letter for letter, to the case of Sri Sai and get a meaning only when we see how Sai Baba (or for that matter any other great soul like Him) acted. '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' (interested in the welfare of every creature) is given as the description of a perfect realiser or perfect devotee. One must actually see or feel what Sai did and said to get an idea of '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' or *Sarvabhutatma bhutatma*. God's omnipotence and omniscience and equal mercy towards all and immanence in all creatures (*Aham Atma*) are well known to the intellect of religious students, but for realising them at heart, one must devote one's deepest attention to what Sai said and did. A person like Sri H. S. Dixit, who noted almost every minute of his life after he approached Sai Baba, that Sai knew everything and looked after everything connected with himself, whether he was at Bombay or Shirdi or elsewhere, and controlled events for securing the greatest happiness of himself or other devotees and their families, would at once form the conclusion that Sai was divine, and could say with perfect sincerity as H. S. Dixit did when Sai Baba asked a question as to what took place in the wada, 'Baba, you knew it all.' There was nothing unknown to Baba whether as to the contents of any book or as to the contents of the minds of persons near or remote or as to the events that happened in any place at any time. The distant past, the present, and the remote future or the near place and the remote were all one. This we find is the description given of a divine personality in the Gita—(7) 26.

Vedham samatitani vartamanani cha arjuna,

Bhavishyaani cha bhutani maam tu veda nakaschana.

This means, (Krishna said) 'I know the past, the present, and the future. But no one knows Me'. The same has been said by Sai and the same has been proved by him in innumerable instances. This is as to knowledge. Similarly as to power, equality of vision, kindness, etc., Sri Upasani Maharaj correctly summed up the way in which people derived the notion that Baba was God in these words of 'Sai Mahimna Stotra' composed by him in 1912—

*Aneka aascruta aatarkya leela vilaasaih Samaavishkrita iscana
bhaasvatprabhaavam Ahambhaavaheenam prasanna aatmabhaavam Namaami
iswaram sadgurum sainatham.*

This means, 'I bow to Sadguru Sainath who is God, who manifested or betrayed his divinity by many inscrutable, unheard of, miraculous leelas, who yet has no egotism (ahambhava) and who is benignly gracious'. This Upasani's process of arriving at and appreciating Sai's divinity is adopted almost unconsciously by hundreds of persons in their every day life, after Baba left the flesh. All of them with one voice acclaim Sai as Divine, and that is the same as saying that He is Sri Krishna or Sri Rama or any other name or form that one has been applying or adopting to denote divinity, *c.f. Sairupadhara Raaghavotamam Bhakta kama kalpatamtn*. There are numerous, or one might say innumerable, instances of Baba's conduct and mode of life running on exactly similar lines to those of Sri Krishna or Sri Rama in respect of their divinity. It is thus that the conviction gained greater strength and depth in the mind of this author that, apart from name and form, Divinity is the same, whether manifested in Sai Baba or in Sri Krishna or for that matter in Jesus Christ etc. 'Thou art human and divine' is a statement that can be applied to all these. The divine portion within the human frame has so powerfully radiated its light as to throw out or drown out the human side and impress on us that we are dealing with the divine when dealing with Sai Baba as with the other great names mentioned above. The divine and the human blend together and are both necessary to make up the entity that gives human beings their impression of God. Without the human element, no approach is possible, and without the divine element, the approach is worthless, for we do not wish to approach mere finite entities like human beings but rather wish to approach the divine, though the divine may be enshrouded for the time being in a human casing.

Therefore, the author has felt that if any work is written about such a divine person and if the author is able to express or shadow forth what is really divine in him, then the work should be considered to be highly imperfect or useless if the reader is not impressed in the same way as the author has been

with the divinity of the subject and the reader is not enabled to derive at least as much benefit from a study of Baba and contact with him as the author has had. A properly written life of Sai (like all saintly biography c.f. *Sant toch Dev*, i.e. Saint is himself God) would therefore be a scripture in itself. One should rise from that study with the feeling that he has been through scripture and mentally keep in touch with God and derive all benefit necessarily flowing from such contact. The benefits are temporal, intellectual, moral, spiritual, etc. There is no limit to the benefit one can derive from such contact. Therefore one would expect that a proper book on such a subject as Sai should attract the earnest soul to read it over and over again, may be scores of times, without exciting any feeling of tiredness or disgust. One ought, on the other hand, to experience increasing delight and increasing joy at noting that new readings open up new lights and vistas before the mind's eye and that benefits are derived over and over again. Even in respect of poetic classics, e.g. Hamlet or Sakuntala, such experiences are derived by enthusiastic souls. A study of holy lives properly written must have at least a similar effect. It is the ambitious aim of this writer to put forward as perfect a study as is possible of this great and wonderful Being that is the subject of this volume.

CHAPTER I

MAHLSAPATHY

To some it may be surprising that an account of the universalistic Sai movement and its leaders should begin with Mahlsapathy, an uncultured poor village goldsmith. But that fits in with the movement starting from the obscure wretchedly poor hamlet of Shirdi in a nook of a nookshotten Kopergaon taluk (Kopergaon means corner village) and also with the lodestar or dynamo of the movement being Sri Sai, an unknown and supposedly crazy fakir as he was taken to be at first. If absence of literary culture were an objection to Mahlsapathy being the leader of the army of Sai bhaktas, it must be applicable equally to Sai himself, the centre or pole star of the Sai movement. Sai who knew everything had no school or book education; no University conferred its diplomas on him. The man who began his worship (M) had only the elementary education which the village veranda schools impart. He would however read his castemen's Bible, namely, Mahlsapathy Purana, and would carry on the traditional worship of Mahlsapathy at home and abroad. In one respect, it is a fact of happy augury that the person who started Sai worship was a pious and orthodox Hindu, who first raised the orthodox objection to Baba's stepping into and residing at the Khandoba temple in his charge, but soon developed into the most zealous admirer and ardent worshipper of Baba. It is this zealous admiration and ardour of the highly virtuous goldsmith that forced Baba to reverence him in turn and to accept the flowers, sandal, and other things placed on his feet by way of homage. His self dedication and great attachment to Sai Baba were irresistible for a large-hearted soul like Sai, and so he (Mahlsapathy) was the first and only person allowed for a long time to worship Sai. The worship no doubt was hardly worship at the beginning. It is difficult to distinguish worship from regard, reverence, and honour evidenced by offer of flowers, sandal, and eatables. Worship has grown throughout the world out of regard, reverence, and a desire to placate. All these were in Mahlsapathy, and his placing flowers and sandal at the feet of Baba and offering him milk were obviously marks of respect. Sai Baba the fakir could not object to them even though these were offered in the Mosque.

When these grew definitely more and more like worship, then Baba himself felt how incongruous Hindu worship of himself was in the Mosque, though it had to grow and develop from there. Its growth in the Mosque turning it finally into a "*Dwarka-mayee*" controlled entirely by a Hindu Board reminds us of a small shoot of a banyan creeping through the cleft of a rock, which a plant cannot easily go through; but yet the banyan grows through it and pushes the pieces of rock aside and grows into huge dimensions. Such was the growth and development of the Hindu puja of Baba. Mahlsapathy the weak Bhikshuk was pre-eminently fitted to be the person who should play the part of the banyan seed. Hence it is not inappropriate to begin the account of Sai history and Sai movement and its leaders with an account of Mahlsapathy.

Mahlsapathy was, as already stated, a hereditary goldsmith (sonar) of the village of Shirdi- The sonars vie with Brahmins and others in their social and religious observances and sometimes style themselves Brahmins and wear the sacred thread. Even in that community, he was noted for his fervent devotion to his tutelary deity Khandoba (known also as Mahlsapathy). Mahlsapathy Purana was his Bible or Ramayana for daily study and for sacred reading at the periodical gatherings of sonars and at the temple (family temple). Every year he went on a pilgrimage of 150 miles to distant Jejoori carrying a Kavadi or palki along with a band to worship at the great temple of that deity. Full fruition of Mahlsa bhakti resulted in his getting that god's obsession in trance (Avesa); and oracular utterances came from that god through his lips. He was Khandoba. He was perfectly pure, straightforward, righteous, and truthful, for only such a guileless person can be favoured by the god coming on his body (Avesa). He was fairly free from worldly desires. The family had a scanty income from the voluntary offerings at their temple which went to the temple maintenance; and all that he owned was a mud house in the village for residence, yielding no income, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land evidently barren land without water supply, which also yielded practically nothing. The very old building outside the village, the Mahlsapathy temple, a poor mud structure, was dedicated to the public or to God. To eke out his living therefore he had the hereditary profession of a

goldsmith. But in a poor village with very few houses and very few visitors, even this brought very little income. Mahlsapathy was not much perturbed about it, being absorbed in his religious ideas and practices. He had frequent Avesa, i. e., visions and trances with obsession; and his goal in life like that of most pious Hindus, was to get free from the cycle of rebirths (Samsara) and attain Liberation (Moksha) through the grace of Khandoba. Khandoba is an Avatar of Siva and thus the Grantor of liberation. 'Moksham Ichchet Maheswarat' {which means, 'If you want liberation, go to Maheswara—Rudra or Siva), is the popular Neeti sloka. To achieve this goal, Mahlsapathy, besides having a satvic temperament, had the great help of Sat Sangha, i.e., contact with holy men (Sadhus, Saints, etc.) (Cf.B.S-XI (II) 25). Though conservative he was not fanatical; he had no hatred of Moslems or men of other faiths. On the other hand, he and other friends of his own temperament, viz., Kasiram Simpi and Appa Bhil, used to receive and help not only Hindu saints such as Devidas, Janakidas, etc., but also fakirs when these visited the village or stayed there. Kasiram and Appa had some means, but poor Mahlsapathy offered his services and zeal, and these three worked together. It was Mahlsapathy's good fortune, due perhaps to Rinanubandha, that he had very close contact with Sri Sai Baba for a very long period—over 40 (nearly 50) years. It was about 1872 perhaps that Sai Baba entered the village along with a "Barat", i.e. a bridegroom's party of Moslems headed by Chand Bhai, Patel of Dhupkeda (in the "Nizam's State"). Then Sai Baba separated from the marriage group very near Khandoba temple at the outskirts of Shirdi and sauntered along almost till the threshold of Khandoba temple. Mahlsapathy, who was inside worshipping Khandoba, noticed Baba's presence and, with usual civility and regard, invited him to sit. After a few minutes, the fakir Baba remarked- "How secluded and quiet a place is the Khandoba temple, best fitted for a Fakir to be in". Then it was that Mahlsapathy put his conservative back up and protested against the proposal that a Moslem should reside in Khandoba temple which in his opinion was unthinkable. Most Moslems are iconoclasts, (i.e. breakers of images) and,

therefore, Mahlsapathy prevented Baba from entering the temple which contained the images of Khandoba etc. Finding Mahlsapathy's objection to be natural, Baba said, 'God is one for Hindus, Moslems, and all, but, as you object to my entry, I shall go'. So saying Baba went away.

Baba in his earliest days was acting in ways wholly unintelligible to the villagers, and even Mahlsapathy considered that he behaved at times like a mad man (See M's reminiscences). But while others lost their respect for Baba on that account, Mahlsapathy always had great regard for Baba, perhaps remembering, as many Hindus do, that there is always a class of saints known as the Unmattha siddhas, crazy saints. Anyhow, the occasional crazy conduct of Baba at least in the view of Mahlsapathy and some others did not bulk large enough to prevent the great esteem which the general conduct of Baba evoked in serious and thoughtful minds, Baba was an absolute "Vairagya Purusha" and never cared for wealth or women. Mahlsapathy, being himself highly detached i.e. of a vairagya temperament and not being overruled by lust or other low urges, could easily appreciate Baba who had the same virtues of purity and non-attachment in a higher degree and therefore, from the very beginning was drawn to Baba. Other people began to worship Baba only when they saw Baba's psychic powers e. g. when he turned water into oil to feed his lamps, and then they regarded him as God. But Mahlsapathy esteemed Baba for his good qualities of purna satva and vairagya, that is, purity and non-attachment; and he found that compared even with Devidas, Janakidas, and other saints with whom Baba was often keeping company; Baba shone brilliantly, and that even those saints, highly regarded Baba. So, Mahlsapathy and his friends considered Baba as well fitted to be a Guru for themselves. Mahlsapathy in that group was the first to honour and then to worship Baba. He went to Baba's Mosque and placed flowers and sandal on Baba's feet or neck and offered him milk. Baba would not allow others to do even this; only Mahlsapathy was allowed to do it. This developed later into regular puja by the use of sandal paste and flowers on Baba's feet, neck, and finally on his forehead also. Even after that, local magnates like Nana Saheb

Dengle, who wanted to do Baba's puja, were not allowed to do it. Baba would tell them: 'There is the pillar in this Dwarakamayi (Mosque). Do puja to the pillar'. That of course, they did not care to do. Nana Saheb Dengle later requested the intercession of Dagdubhai, a constant companion of Baba and, encouraged by his words, did puja and became Baba's second worshipper, Baba gradually allowed others to do his puja, and then Baba's puja became general. Few realised the part played by Mahlsapathy as the pioneer of Sai puja and the Sai movement.

Mahlsapathy's contact with Baba was on very close terms. By reason of the death of his only son (in the eighties of the last century perhaps) and his having only three daughters, he was disgusted with life. His land yielded nothing, and the goldsmith's profession yielded also practically nothing. So, he was ready for the orders of his own Ishta Devata, Khandoba. Khandoba came upon him, that is, possessed his body, and gave him Drishtanta, that is, visions. In the first vision, he was told that he was to take Khandoba (i.e. movable images) from the Khandoba temple to his own house, and worship him there with concentration. In another vision, Khandoba appeared as an old Brahmin and said to him, "What? Can you not get your bread without your profession of goldsmith?"¹ Then Mahlsa-

¹ *Though sonars follow Brahminical rules or Achara-yet a goldsmith's work is worldly. Further, as a rule, goldsmiths filch part of the gold or silver given to them for making ornaments. This filching is done very cleverly with a sense of duty i.e. the feeling that filshing is the goldsmith's duty or dharma, the violation of which entails punishment. Here is an of quoted instance. A young goldsmith suffered from intense stomach trouble and informed his mother that it was due to his failure to filch part of the gold when she had given him her gold "Tali" or mai.galya bhushana to melt and remake. A story illustrative of the great cunning with which the gold (or silver) is filched is as follows. ^uuuuir ^liirttir/r.

pathy answered the vision. 'Yes. I shall give up'. Then the vision said, 'Touch my feet, and hold to my feet This meant evidently, 'Hereafter, regard your subsistence as being dependent purely upon your holding to my feet and not upon your doing goldsmith's work*. From that time forwards, he gave up goldsmith's work in perfect trust (NISHTA AND SRADDHA) and lived by begging, that is, he became really a Sanyasi "Monk" or Bhikshaikari, though living with a family of a wife and three daughters. Being disgusted with life, he did not care to sleep at home for that would develop his family cares and burdens, i.e. Samsara, still further. He enjoyed Baba's Company day and night and was

A military officer wanted to have a gold plate or strip put on his cane. He came to a goldsmith, gave him a sovereign and sat in front of his anvil with a bare sword. He said that if the goldsmith filched any of the gold, he would be stabbed with that sword immediately. The goldsmith had his fire ready and made the sovereign into three plates and began applying one strip of gold to the cane. Meanwhile some boys were playing marbles in front of the smithy. To divert the officer's attention, the goldsmith pointed to the boys and told the officer "See, Sir, these boys are ruined by their marble play". The officer diverted his gaze to the boys just for a few seconds and within that time, the goldsmith picked up one of the gold strips from the ground and hid it in his palm in which he was holding his pincers. But as he would have to stretch his palm, holding it up to receive his wages, he hit on another device. He asked the officer what for he held his bare sword in his hand. The reply was "To stab you if you steal any of the gold". At once the goldsmith, as though horrified, put his hand to his mouth saying "Appa Appa Amma Amma". It is usual for horrified persons to beat their mouth with their palm. While doing so, his palm slipped the gold strip into his mouth where it was safe from discovery. The work was then completed and the poor officer paid the wages into his palm, fancying that nothing had been stolen. Such is the proverbial cleverness and pertiracy of goldsmiths in 'stealing precious metals, etc.

greatly benefitted thereby. At the Mosque and at the chavadi, Baba slept on alternate nights and to both places Mahlsapathy went and had his bed along with Baba.² Mahlsapathy's main work was to be with Baba, and he never failed to be with and sleep with Baba. But on one occasion, early in life, about 1896, Baba himself said, "Arre Baagat, listen to my fakiri words, which are always true. You are coming and sleeping here and not with your wife. But you have got only daughter (the only son *he* had must have died before 1896.) Daughters are like tamarind fruit but a son is like a mango fruit. You go and take bed in your house, and you will then get a son," In spite of Baba's pressure, he declined to go home as he did not want his family (samsara) to increase. But his friend Kasiram Simpi compelled him and took him home and left him there. Thereafter he took his bed in his house. He started it on the Janmashtami of 1896, and on the next Janmash-tami (1897) a son was born to him. Baba's words are ever true and never false. But, having got a son, he resumed his old vow of not developing Samsara and ever afterwards slept only with Baba, in the Mosque, and at the chavadi. Mahlsapathy would spread his own cloth and on that Baba (when not lying on the plank) would lie on one half, and he would lie on the other. Baba also gave him very hard duties which others could not possibly undertake. Baba would tell Mahlsapathy, "You had better sit up. Do not go to sleep. Place your hand on my heart. I will be going on with remembrance of Allah, Nama Smaran, that is, a half conscious trance, and during that Nama Smaran, the heart beat would clearly show you that I am still having Nama Smaran. If that suddenly goes away and natural sleep supervenes, wake me up." The heart beat during natural sleep would be evidently different from the heart beat of the contemplative trance. Thus neither Baba nor Mahlsapathy would sleep at night. Both would keep awake, Baba for

² *To both places, only after Baba broke the small plank on which he kept lying wide awake at the Mosque. Before that, evidently, it was only at the chavadi that Mahlsapathy slept with Baba. Baba's breaking the plank may have been about 1898.

directly communing with God, and by that means doing service to numerous devotees in various places, and Mahlsapathy for sharing the merit (*punya*) by keeping the vigil with Baba and benefiting himself morally and spiritually by his pious service. His *tapas* was the same practically as the tapas of Baba, that is, vigil for holy purposes. He also had great control over all his senses (Indriyas), not merely over the sex urge but also over hunger and other urges and cravings, though he was not able to overcome sleep always. At times for a fortnight he would go without food, purely by the power of his will, and sometimes his family also would suffer as shortage of food was the consequent of Mahlsapathy's having no profession and no earning and his rejection of offers of money and goods. This is a very important point to note about Mahlsapathy. His attitude towards acceptance of alms is one which very orthodox Hindus would understand. He regarded all acceptance of alms from others as a direct interference with his own perfection of power. (See SB XI (17) 41). Pratigraham manyamanah Tapas tejo Yesconudam i. e. "accepting gifts as destructive of austerities, power, and fame". His "*Apoorva*" i. e. stored up merit was heightened by lasting, vigils, and other "punya karma," such as reading of sacred literature, etc., and if he accepted gifts (dana) from others, he believed (as many other orthodox Hindus believe) that his merit or *Apoorva* would be lost, "diminished, or transferred at least to some extent to the donor whose gift he accepted. Therefore he was strongly opposed to accepting any gifts (except Biksha food) even though he and his family might be starving. His family also completely accepted that axiom and they also would generally reject offers of help in money, materials, etc.³ Baba himself several times tried to press him to accept money.

³ *Chintaraan Rao's offer of Rs. 1000. M. A. Sait's offer of Rs. 100. Some one's offer of Rs. 10 was rejected. Baba asked what it was M- refused. 'Rs. 10,' he was told. Then Baba himself received the Rs. 10 and immediately gave it away to some one present. M was a sadhaka still and feared contact of wealth. But Baba, realising himself as the Atman had no fear of being tainted or tempted by touching money, etc. See S. B. (Bhikshu Gita) Ch XXIII 57, Ch. IV (17) which

When Baba was getting large incomes, (1880-1918) he was daily showering Rs. 30 on one, Rs. 15 on another, Rs. 10 on a third, and so on. Baba told Mahlsapathy several times;-'Take this Rs. 3. Go on taking it'. Mahlsapathy invariably refused. Baba even added. 'Go on receiving Rs. 3. I will make you well-to-do, and other people will come to you and depend on you and look to your favour; make your life comfortable.'" Mahlsapathy invariably replied: 'I do not want all that. I want only to worship your feet.' He counted his avoidance of gifts and contentment with his lot as far above his attaining or retaining material wealth. He (M) would not sleep on cots. He would not care to have comforts of any other sort, even though these were available or offered to him. He strongly reminds us of the holy poverty of St. Francis of Assisi, the Akinchanya, which is so highly praised in scripture (see especially M. B. Moksha Dharma Scanti P. ch. 165 Samyaka upadesa. 5-11, 16 & 22). Baba had to offer inducements of "*Abhaya*" and support, etc. to various people to raise them to high spiritual effort. But in the case of Mahlsapathy, no inducements and assurances were required, as Mahlsapathy had already achieved the high, water mark of purity, virtue, austerity (tapas), and wisdom (Jnana), so far as that was possible in his circumstances.

An important event in Mahlsapathy's life that he was connected with was Baba's trying to leave his body about 1886 and returning to it three days later. Baba had made him the guardian of his body and told him, *Arre Bhagat, look after this body for three days. I am going to Allah. If I do not return, then get it buried in due course at that place, (that is, near the sacred gode neem tree).'

Mahlsapathy supported Baba's body on his own knee, and when officers, including the village headman karnam, etc., held an inquest over the body, declared it dead, and wanted it to be buried he with the help of others stoutly opposed their proposal and saved Baba from losing his body, as

runs thus " Arthanjnshan api hrishikapate na liptah, ye anye svatah parihritadapi bibhyati sma" (i e. O! Lord of your senses, you are unaffected by objects you enjoy, while others are afraid of them even in the absence of those objects.)

Sankaracharya's is said to have been lost (See Sankara Vjaya) when he tried a similar attempt to leave and re-enter his body in order to enter a grihasta royal body by *parakaya pravesa*. Thus, he rendered a valuable service in 1886, after which Baba lived for 32 years to create this huge Sai movement that has covered this land. If Mahlsapathy had failed in his duty, and Baba had been buried perhaps the course of history might have been different.

One incident we may mention as to how he (M) served Baba and carried out his pious efforts. As usual, he had spread his cloth and Baba was lying on one half of that cloth, and he was lying on the other. Then Baba told him. 'I say, come on. To-day we shall be on the watch. The rude Rohilla (death from plague) is wanting to take away the wife of the Nigoj Patil. I am praying to Allah to prevent that by Nama Smaran. You had better see that no one comes and disturbs me in my Nama Smaran.'

Accordingly Mahlsapathy kept awake to try and see that no disturbance took place. But, unfortunately, in the middle of the night the Nivas Mamlatdar had come. He and his peons took a fancy to take Baba's darsan, which could be had for nothing, so, at midnight, the peon of the Mamlatdar came and stating that Darsan was wanted and udhi was wanted, made a noise. Mahlsapathy tried to prevent it but who could prevent official *hauteur* or *jabardas* ? Mahlsapathy was trying to oblige the peon by getting down the steps to give him some udhi, but the noise made disturbed Baba's trance (contemplation), and Baba sat up, and hurled foul curses and told Mahlsapathy. 'Arre Bhagat, you are a man with family! And don't you know what is taking place at Nigoj? This disturbance has caused a failure in my efforts. *That Patil's wife is dead*. Let that go. What has happened is for the best'. In his anger, Baba threw away Mahlsa-pathy's cloth on him, telling him that he should not allow disturbance like that to Baba's holy work of contemplation and prayer.

Baba, for about 40 years must have benefited Mahlsapathy in innumerable ways the details of which are not available, and above all kept him to the high water mark of devotion, surrender and self abnegation. As usual, Baba used his wonderful Supranormal powers and knowledge e.g. His

knowledge of the present in all distant places, which is called "clairvoyance" and knowledge of the future, immediate or remote, to benefit Mahlsapathy. He used also his control over minds and matter (including human bodies) for his devotee's benefit and kept watching him to secure his welfare whether he was near or far, even 150 miles off and gave him warning and afforded relief where necessary.

Baba's "eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love him". Baba's watch over Mahlsa saved him from shipwreck in his food problems. At times, for long periods the starvation of the devotee and his family came perilously-near the danger point. Then Baba suddenly made the devotee relax his vow. On one such occasion, H. S. Dixit was somehow made aware of the danger. He wished to send up a ten rupee note to Mahlsapathy- To make sure that it should not be rejected, he enclosed it in an envelope and took it to Baba and without any other words asked Baba "Shall I send this"? Baba Said "Yes" He sent it, and it was accepted. Baba had his Antarjnan of the gift and had told Mahala's wife some hours earlier: "Tell your husband, Baba is coming to the house, and he should not reject Baba". So when the envelope with the 10 rupee note came, Mahlsapathy was sure that Baba's message referred to the envelope and he accepted it.

The snake infested Shirdi was full of danger to its inhabitants. One evening as Mahlsapathy was leaving Eaba's Mosque, Baba told him that he was likely to meet two thieves (snakes) on the way, and accordingly Mahlsapathy found one at his doorsteps and the other at the neighbouring house. One day Baba told him. 'When you return, come with a lamp, for you will find a thief at the gate'. Accordingly, Mahlsapathy came with a lamp in his hand, and found a snake at the gate, and cried out 'snake, snake'. The neighbours gathered and killed it.

Baba once warned him in general words, 'Don't put your back against the earth'. Not remembering this advice, and in his usual slovenly way, Mahlsapathy, having consumed too much of Burfi got giddy, sat on the floor, and losing his consciousness, glided down. He then was with his bare back on the ground He was dreaming or delirious and talking in his dream, keeping his legs stretched on

the bare earth all the time. When he returned to consciousness and sat awake, he found he could not bend his leg. His daughters had to massage his knees and legs, and thereafter he was able to walk upto Baba. When he arrived there, Baba told him, 'Did I not tell you not to put your back against earth?' On one occasion, Baba gave him warning that something wrong would happen at Khandoba's, and that, however, he need not be afraid as Baba would do the needful. Then very soon, his wife and daughter fell ill and soon after, the other members of his family also fell ill. This was after 1908, after which date the number of Shirdi visitors increased including many doctors. Meanwhile Baba told Mahlsapathy, 'Let the sick people keep to bed', and walking round his Mosque with a short stick in hand Baba was waving his short stick and using threatening words :—'Come, whatever may be your power, let us see! I shall show you what I can do with my chota stick, if you come out and face me'. This was Baba's treatment of the disease. However, amongst the numerous visitors, there were doctors who gave medicines to Mahlsapathy to be given to his sick family. Mahlsapathy consulted Baba regarding the medicines, but Baba dissuaded him from administering the medicines to the sick at home. In the result, all got well without medicine. Baba's way of fighting disease is not the modern way of medicine, but it was unmistakably effective.

Baba's watching was often of great benefit to Mahlsapathy in other domestic matters also. Once M's wife had gone to her mother's house at a distant village. When she was there, she developed a painful tumour near her-neck, but she did not communicate that to her husband. But Baba's watching eye of supervision, which rests on all those relying on him with loving trust, noted this fact. He told Mahlsapathy at Shirdi : 'Your wife has a tumour in the throat. None can cure it except myself, and I shall cure it'. Mahlsapathy knowing nothing about his wife's health simply said 'Yes, Baba'. Later he received a letter mentioning the painful tumour, and adding that it had been cured.

Baba used his knowledge of coming events for "Bhagat" as Baba called this *bhakta* Mahlsapathy, and revealed them to him when necessary. He was a poor man, whose three daughters were married to people at various villages. His

Sambandis (i.e. fathers-in-law of those daughters) had no regard for him. The reader may remember Lamb's essay on "A Poor Relation". On one occasion, one of the Sambandis at a distant village invited him to dine with him, and Mahlsapathy went to take Baba's leave. When granting leave. Baba said, "You are going to be insulted there'. Mahlsapathy went along with his friend, but when he went to his Sambandi's house, he found the Sambandi's people had already finished their meal and were washing their hands without caring to wait for the arrival of their poor relation Mahlsapathy. This was an obvious insult and he returned refusing to take his meal. He returned to Baba and told him all the facts.

On another occasion, one Ram Bhav Harde, a Sai Baba bhakta, invited Mahlsapathy to go to his village 'Astinagram' some six or ten miles away from Shirdi. There was to be a Mahlsapathy Purana reading by Mahhapathy to be followed by a dinner. So it was an interesting occasion, and Mahlsapathy went to take leave of Baba. Baba said, 'Do not go. There will be a fight there'. Yet having been invited, he could not avoid goiig, and he went to that village. He sat and read Mahlsapathy puraram there, and while that was going on the host's graceless, sturdy and rowdy boys with other boys sat for their meal and began to exchange hot words. From words they quickly came to blows with sticks, and on account of the free use of the cudgels, the audience that was present for the Purana reading fled in fright and Mahlsapathy also had to pack up his purana and follow their wise example. He returned to Shirdi and told Baba, 'Your words have proved true to the letter'.

Long before N. G. Chandorkar and others arrived, i.e. in the eighties of the last Century, Baba spoke of the future of Shirdi. Baba told Bhagat and others who were with him at the chavadi, 'In this place (Shirdi) there will be huge storeyed buildings rising, big fairs will be held, and big men, Subedars, and others will be coming. My Brahmins will gather and elephants, horses and Shankar Nana will also come' Guns will be fired (Dhadanga Dishe Udenga)'. People hearing this began to smile. They thought, 'What, all this for this worthless nook of an insignificani hamlet'. But some decades later, every one of Baba's statements came true, and that nook of an insignificant village has already

become a small town with big storied buildings, sugar factories with machinery, annual fairs, festivals, etc., and the daily puja of Baba attracts thousands including ladies and gentlemen of the highest position from all parts of India.

Baba knew the future of this devotee but gave him only hints. When Mahlsapathy got a male child in 1897 and took him to Baba and talked of Namakarana, i.e. the name to be given to the child, Baba, evidently to prevent his being too much attached to the son, told him "*Look after* the child for 25 years and that would be sufficient". The father's business is only to *look after* this new arrival in a detached spirit, knowing that the connection is only for a fixed time. Mahlsa did not understand all this, or that 25 years period indicated the length of his life which was to end in 1922; but with true humility and submission he told Baba that "looking after" the child was not in his power-but only in Baba's power. Baba's reply was still more significant. "Be thou, the Nimitta" i.e. the apparent instrument, said Baba, reminding us of Sri Krishna's direction to Arjuna to fight the MahaBharata battles as a mere instrument in His hands "Nimittamatram Bhava Savyasachin". Mahlsapathy though a surrendered soul could not have banished his ego and risen then to the full height indicated above i.e. to treat all acts done by his body as the acts of the Supreme. Baba was leading him on to that height on the above and other occasions.

But more interesting to common folk than this is Baba's keeping watch over him night and day. When Mahlsapathy often obtained leave of Baba to go for his night meal, Baba used to say, 'Go. I am with you.' No harm then befell M. Though Baba was not physically accompanying M, his invisible guardianship was evident.

Baba's watch over Mahlsapathy was also for his moral benefit. Though Mahlsapathy was generally of a pious disposition, sometimes he committed mistakes. Every night he used to feed a crippled bitch, and one day, having fed it, he said, 'Go', But the creature did not stir. He took a stick and gave it a beating, and then it howled with pain and ran away. That night when Mahlsapathy went to the Mosque and shampooed Baba's legs, Bapu Saheb, Dada Kelkar and others were with him. Baba said, 'Arre, there is a bitch, sickly like me, in the

village. Everybody is beating it'. Then at once Mahlsapathy, remembering his behaviour repented his mistake. This is not trivial, as we shall see further on.

Baba's company, Seva, example and help kept Mahlsapathy very high up in his spiritual level. He bore great love to Baba. When Baba passed away in 1918, he, on account of his attachment, declined all food and fasted for 13 days. Probably to prevent a shock, Baba had given him hints of his (Baba's) impending final departure. It was Mahlsapathy's custom to spend all his time with Baba except when he went for his meal, etc Later Baba would send some one or other to fetch him from his house. Then he would light up *chilm* (i.e. smoking pipe), do odd jobs for Baba, and prepare Baba's bed, which was a very peculiar arrangement. Baba always kept his head on an old brick (which is believed to be the brick given to him by Venkusa with a torn cloth). Madhav Fasle, a servant of Baba used to hand over that brick to Mahlsapathy every night and along with it, a tattered cloth (believed to be Venkusa's gift) to be placed over it and other cloths to be spread on the ground as bed for Baba. Mahlsapathy would first place the brick and then the tattered cloth, and then spread the other cloth or cloths. Ten or twelve days before 1918, Dassara, Madhav False, in handing over the brick, allowed it to slip down to the ground, and it broke into two. Then the broken pieces were placed as pillows for Baba. Baba asked 'Who broke the brick?' Mahlsapathy mentioned that Madhav False broke the brick. Baba got very angry with Madhav and placed his hands on his own head and felt extremely sad. Baba said 'Sopat tutali' i.e., the companion is broken. Next day, Kala (HS. Dixit) came and said there was no need to deplore the breaking, as he would join the pieces with silver joints. Baba said: "Even if you join them with gold, what is the use? *This brick is my Sobatya (companion)* (evidently from his Selu days) and its breakage betokens evil." From that time onwards Baba was disspirited. At least Mahlsapathy thought so. Baba, even before this, had given Mahlsapathy a hint. He told him once when he (Mahlsapathy) was preparing to light a lamp and fill up Baba's pipe, 'Arre Bhagat, in a few days from this, I will be going somewhere. After that, you come at night for 2 or 4 years'; This was not understood by Mahlsapathy. But Baba's spirit passed beyond our ken into AVYAKTA on 15th

October 1918, and Mahlsapathy was able to do his nightly usual puja to Baba only for 2 or 4 years, for he passed away on 11—9—1922.

Baba's help to Mahlsapathy in his religious efforts and in securing a good end may be noted, because dying on an Ekadasi day is conducive to or indicative of Sadgati. Mahlsapathy passed away, in circumstances to be described more fully later, on an Ekadasi day in 1922 after a life of religious striving. In the case of Mahlsapathy, his firm faith was in Khandoba, and Baba treated Khandoba, Vittoba, and Allah as the same c. f. BGIV 11 & VIII 21-All worship is God's worship. God reaches us in the form we choose.' Khandoba's grace to Mahlsapathy was manifested several times, and whenever there was a difficulty for Mahlsapathy, Khandoba gave him visions. In one of those visions, Khandoba asked him to go and see Vittal at Pandharpur, and in the case of such a poor man like Mahlsapathy, who had to beg his bread for himself and family, a pilgrimage to Pandharpur was no joke. But by Khandoba's grace, he got some pecuniary help for the journey, and a well-to-do family as his companions. With them he reached Pandhari. At Pandharpur, the crowds were always unmanageably large, and it was not easy for one to cut his way through the mass to Vittal. Then there were the professional priests demanding coins to take a man to the Vittal image. But Mahlsapathy had no coins, and so special interference on his behalf by Khandoba was necessary. As he was moving with the crowd nearer and nearer to Vittoba, suddenly people began to note that Mahlsapathy's face was exactly like Khandoba's and said that Khandoba had actually come to take darsan of Vittoba and cleared a way for him. The Pandas also must have been similarly impressed. That made Vittal darsan easy for Mahlsapathy.

Similar instances of help for himself and party were manifested at his pilgrimage to Jejuri. Once when they were going on their horses, the police intercepted them on the way and examined their passes. Finding one having no pass, they stopped him and put him into the police station; and the procession could not start from the village. That man had to go and get a pass from the Kulkarni. That Kulkarni showed his talent for taking work gratis from all persons. A Niti sloka says rightly :—Makshiko Maruto vescya yachako mushakas tatha

gramanirganakas chaiva saptaiate para badhakah". i.e gnats, winds, courtesans, beggars, rats, village headmen and karnams (i.e. kulkarnis) these seven are pestering parasites. He delayed the issue of a pass and said 'You go on splitting fuel for me'. He gave Mahlsapathy's man an axe to split fuel i.e. to do work gratis. Then the man took up the axe and after a few strokes, the handle was broken. Then the Kulkarni gave him a second handle. The second handle also broke. Then a third handle was given, and that also shared the same fate. Then the Kulkarni said, 'God does not allow you to work', and gave him the pass.

Baba's watch over the pilgrimages of Mahlsapathy and his other movements shows Baba's great and mysterious power and His wonderful love and guardian-stip of the bhaktas. These are well illustrated in many instances of which a few more may be mentioned, On one occasion when Mahlsapathy and party reached Jejuri, 150 miles from Shirdi, plague was raging there, and Mahlsapathy sat down dejected leaning against his palki (Kavadi), not knowing what to do. Suddenly he saw Baba behind him; and Baba vanished. Then he got embolde-and told his companions : 'Baba is with us and we need not worry'. Accordingly the pilgrimage was satisfactorily over, and there was no loss of life. When he returned to Shirdi, Baba told him, 'I found you leaning against the Palki at Jejuri'. Mahlsapathy was convinced that his eyes did not deceive him at Jejuri and that Baba was everywhere guarding his bhaktas.

On another occasion when Mahlsapathy and his group had gone for an annual Jejuri pilgrimage, they were returning followed by another group i.e. Malam Bhagat Pilki. Then they met thieves who were armed with axes and who wore masks or were covering their faces with thick blankets. As they approached the Palki to rob it, Mahlsapathy courageously took out a handful of Bhandar, i.e. coloured rice and sandal and threw it at them as prasad. Then they quietly retreated to an adjoining wood. Then Mahlsapathy and his friends went on followed by Malam Bhagat palki, and they noted that there was no image in their own palki. All the party looked into it (i.e., Mahlsapathy's palki) to see whether all their images were there. They found none. Then some one said. 'Are we to carry an empty palki to Shirdi?. That day was a Sunday, which is Khandoba's day. At

the very outset. M said, 'No pilgrimage on Sunday' But the others had disagreed, and now Mahlsapathy told the others, 'This is the evil of doing pilgrimage on Sunday'. Suddenly Mahlsapathy got in .to a trance, and Khandoba talking through him said, 'Arre, what day is this? Is it not my day? Why are you carrying palki? To-day I am busy hunting out on a hill. After hunting is over, I will come to Shirdi. You had better go now'. Then he woke up from trance, and the palki went on and came to Kandoba's temple at Shirdi. People at Shirdi, for instance, Shakaram Kandukar and others came to the palki to take Darsan. Shakaram looked into the palki and found all the images ' there. 'What is the talk of all the images missing?' he asked the people. He showed them, and said 'Here are alt the images'.

Mahlsapathy's case is an excellent instance of Baba's method of unifying religion and creeds successfully. Mahlsapathy was only an ordinary, conservative, orthodox worshipper of Khandoba. Sai Baba, he considered a Muslim and even objected to his entry into Khandoba's temple when Sai Baba came to Shirdi with Chan Bhai Patel's party. This same man became Baba's ardent devotee and worshipped him. In fact not only was he the first in point of time amongst the worshippers, but he was also the foremost in excellence. Mahlsapathy felt that Baba was God. Whatever may be the difference in name and form, Scanker, Scani, Ganapati, and Khandoba are all one, and Baba with divine power was the same. M also went to Pandharpur to worship Vittal (a form of Maha Vishnu and had no sectarian i.e. (Siva Vishnu) prejudices. He and his group honoured all saints, Hindu and Muslim, and they applied Tukaram's famous saying 'Jo Sant, Toch Dev! o Dev, Toch Sant', meaning 'God is the same as the Saint and the Saint is the same as God' to fakirs as well as Hindu saints. He was the first to do puja to Baba and even apply sandal to him. Baba's objection to his being worshipped in that fashion melted away under the keen sense of Mahlsapathy's love and devotion. As Mahlsapathy made no difference between Khandoba and Baba, and as all thoughts of men were known to Baba, Baba could not object to any of the ways adopted for worship at the Khandoba temple being applied to him. Baba's divine heart of love responded to the outpourings of Mahlsapathy's love; and so, Mahhaphy became Baba's ANKITA

SISHYA. Baba said (if not expressly at least by unmistakable utterance and conduct). 'He is mine'. The Arati song says.

Jo Sanduchya *ankita* Jiva Jhala,

Tyacha Ase Bhara niranjanala.

This means, the devotee who is stamped as mine by a Sadhu, has no more burden or responsibility to bear, as all his burdens and responsibilities rest on the Saint (or the Guru God). Baba showed his assumption of responsibility in innumerable ways. Especially when he sent him in the evenings away from the Mosque, he would be saying 'Go, I am with you' i.e. *I will protect you.' And he did. Baba's cure of Mahlsapathy's wife's tumour at a distant place far off from Siiirdi, and the cure of her children of their disease at other times are excellent instances of Baba's protection and love. When the bhakta had no son, and yet refused to go and live with his family, it was Baba's repeated assurance that he would get a male child that induced him to go and sleep at home and thus get a son. This son is named Martanda and is still living and worshipping at his father's tomb. This is considered important, as dying without a son will take a man to Hell (Put Naraka). Mahlsapathy's response to Baba's love was evidenced by M's dedication of himself to Baba's service. Mahlsapathy not only shared his cloth bed with Baba every night at the Mosque and chavadi, but also shared his night vigil. Mahlsapathy's help to rouse Baba when the vigil stopped and gave way to natural sleep was a special help to Baba, and through Baba to everybody. Mahlsapathy's effort to keep the Baba body for three days in 1886 against the mischance of being buried on the compulsion of the officers was a signal service not only to Baba but to the entire Sai bhaktas and the public at large. Baba's recognition of this attachment closely resembling Hanuman's attachment to Rama was expressed by Baba's calling him Bhagat i.e. Bhakta. B. V- Dev calls Ma Bhakta Manickya and a Mahatma in his preface to M's reminiscences. Both epithets are apt and just.

The end of such a soul when life passes away must necessarily be a good end, (sadgati). Baba made this assurance doubly sure and granted him the merit of dying on an Ekadasi day (with God in his mind and on his lips) just as he did

this for several other bhaktas of his. Dying on an Ekadasi day is conducive to departure in a holy mood from this life (through the bright and smokeless path). B, Gita VIII 6 says.

Yam yam vapi Smaran Bhavam

Tyajati ante kalebaram

Tarn tam eva eti kounteya

Sada tad bhava bhavitah

That is 'Whatever a person thinks of (being in constant touch with it) at the time of death he reaches'. When Mahlsapathy's death was approaching, he retained full-consciousness and control of his mind. That was on 11th Sep. 1922 Monday (in the month of Badrapada, Ekadasi Somavara, sacred to Shiva and Khandoba) Having finished all his puja, he said to his family, 'To-day is my father's Shradha day. Finish cooking soon. To-day I close my earthly life and go to Heaven'. So, Laxman, the Brahmin, came and finished the Shradha at once and finished the gift of balis to crows, cows, etc, and guests were fed. Then the family meals were finished. Mahlsapathy took betel and nuts after his meal. After chewing a bit, he put on a *kupni*. Having near him, Bala Gurav, Ramachandra Kothe, etc., he told them ;all to do *Ramachandrajapa* Japa went on. His son was there, and he gave him his stick. Muhlsapaty said to his son, 'Spend time piously in Uttama Bhakti Marga i.e. in holy devotion. All that I told you will happen." Then Mahlsapathy uttered the word '*Ram*' and breathed his last. Thus he passed away in calm faith and cheerfulness on the 11th September 1922. This death was a fitting termination to a pure, lofty and dedicated life—a life of Love, faith and total surrender— a death that may be envied by many who may not be prepared to adopt the rigorous course that led up to it and ensured it. His remains are interred in a tomb at Shirdi which is still worshipped by many.

Some may fancy that merely rebuking Mahlsapathy for mercilessly hitting a bitch for not moving out when told to go is a mere ordinary lesson in *Ahimsa* or fair treatment of brutes. But from the standpoint of Baba's development of pupils, it is much more. Any one who is capable of hitting a bitch naturally thinks poorly of a bitch and highly of himself, and does not hesitate to injure a "lower creature".

This is not merely a vice but evidence of Rajasic Tamasa obscuring the soul's light—a very serious obstacle to the attainment of equal vision, c.f. (1) Somatvam yogauchyate (2) Niridosan hi *samam* Brahman Tasmāt Brahmani te sthilah BGV. 19 to the attainment of 'Sarvabhutatma bhutatmatvam', that is, realising God or the Self in every creature and paying reverence to it. BGV. 7. First, about equal vision, it will be noted that alike In the B Gita and Krishnoddhava Samvada, (SBXI) *samatva* of Equal View is repeatedly stressed as a qualification for and a mark of the Jnani. If a man has realised Brahman (i.e. got Jnana), then all creatures are alike Brahman, and he treats them all equally and makes no invidious distinctions between them, worshipping one, beating another, etc. Vidya Vinaya sampannc Brahmane Gavi hastini Scuni chaiva Scvapakecha Panditah Samadarscinah. BGV. 18. The want of *samatva* denotes a failure to rise above vulgar mediocrity; and beating shows the need for a great deal of effort to rise to heights of equal vision. Equal vision is sometimes considered a mere poetical ideal which is not practical—Many may think it not worthwhile, when they are in active life, when still living in the family, to aim at equal, vision-*samatva*. But Baba did not take that view. Mahlsapathy was a family man, '*grihasta*' living with his family up to the last and died in the midst of his relations, Yet Baba raised him nearer and nearer to the level of equal vision, and the first step in that effort is to stop cruelty to animals. So his warning against the beating of the bitch must be viewed in the light of the need for achieving equal vision. Higher steps are not achieved merely by stopping the beating of animals. Higher steps are accelerated by Baba's highest plank, namely, seeing of Himself or God in all creatures: *Sarvabhutatma bhutatmatvam*. That is Baba wanted his highest bhaktas to feel strong enough about his (Baba's) being God. They should feel his being in all animals and consequently God being in all animals, a result which should be manifested by either mental or even actual physical worship offered to some animals at any rate. Namdev's recognition of Vittal in a dog, after he had been trained by the Guru Visoba Kesar in equal vision and in the treatment of all objects as manifestation of God, has already been mentioned in the previous volume, Mahlsapathy was the best fitted to gain that faculty of seeing (Sai) God

in a creatures or to sing or feel with Kabir "Sabghata Atma Rama Govinda-Hari Bole Hari Bole Bhai". In the Bhagavata recognising the difficulty of actual physical worship being offered to all creatures, the advice is given that the worship may be mental, and the stanza runs—

Manasaiva etani bhutani
Pranamet Bahumanayan
Iswaro Jiva kalayo
Pravishto Bhagavaniti

This means, 'Remembering the fact that all these creatures have an Atma or Soul and that the Soul is but the reflection or part of God, one should feel that God is in all these creatures, esteem them and worship them only *mentally*'. It is not known whether Mahlsapathy, Chandokar, or any other devotee actually did this worship as a sadhana when he met creature after creature or any creature or succeeded in feeling that God's reflection, that is, God Himself in another form was in every creature. But this was evidently Baba's intention, and one might presume that some of the bhaktas of Baba did achieve a fairly high degree of progress in this sadhana. One Lakshmi going to Baba's tomb, shortly after He passed away, was bemoaning his loss and prayed to him to show his form to her. As she was moving out, she met a serpent on her way. At once she cried out, 'Baba, if you show me your form in this serpent shape, how am I to get on?' This is an interesting instance. If even a rustic woman, not presumed to know anything about higher culture or the higher sadhanas in the Sastras was able to recognise or treat Baba as being in a snake, surely other bhaktas of Baba may be presumed to have made some advance in this all important matter. The great importance of this step of recognising God in all creatures can be inferred from the fact that the lesson is repeated more than a dozen times in the Bhagavata Gita and in the Ekadasa Skanda of Bhagavata i.e. Uddhava Gita. Naturally the utterance in the Upanishad 'Sarvam kaluidam Brahma', that is, 'All this manifested Universe is God' cannot be achieved by one who fails to go even through the first step, namely, treating the living creatures in the Universe as manifestations of God. God is power plus mercy, plus sameness, or equality and

omniscience and omnipresence. One can magnify the bits of these qualities found in animals and treat them as potentially infinite or as tiny reflections of Godhead. So one ought to first view the creatures around him as manifestations of God, and their bodies as temples (Deho Devalayah Proktah Sivo Jivah Sanatanah) and mentally reverence them. The practical difficulties of reverencing all creatures and observing equality of vision have been referred to by great saints like Sri Ramakrishna and solutions have been given by them for practice to overcome such difficulties. If a tiger is to be treated as God, when it is coming to attack one, it will be over with the man, and there is no further sadhana practicable for him. So one has to keep the tiger or lion (Mriga-namcha mrigendroaham BGX, 30-) at a distance and mentally reverence it, overcoming one's fear as part of one's sadhana, no doubt taking good care to see to one's safety. The same applies to snakes and other destructive creatures. Amongst human beings also there are unfortunate specimens of uttermost heights of vice and cruelty and other and unsociable features, and these cannot be approached by any ordinary sadhaka. A Chaitanya may no doubt go out and beard the lion in his den and meet the murderous robber in his own haunt and may come off victorious, but that, however, cannot be copied safely by ordinary sadhakas. Hence, one may stress the word '*Mansaiva*' in the above quotation from the Bhagavata with reference to this practice.

After reverence is achieved, then comes the question of identity. Sri Sai Baba, the highest realiser and teacher of Brahma Nishta, viewed everything as Brahman. 'I am Brahman; all this is Brahman; I am all' said Sai, as a great realiser that he was might be expected to say. As a stepping stone to that position, reverence to all is an important achievement and that reverence is made possible by the Ahimsa lesson taught by Baba to Mahlsapathy, This is the chief recorded lesson in Mahlsapathy's memoirs taken down by his son to his dictation, but one may be sure that when Mahlsapathy lived for four or five decades at least along with Baba, day and night, in the Masudi and Chavadi, up to the last moment of Baba's earthly life, numerous other instances of ahimsa and view of creatures as manifestations of God and identification of oneself with

all that is, must have occurred and must have been noticed by Mahlsapathy to his great advantage. Mahlsapathy however was not a cultured man and the few memoirs that he dictated at the fag end of his life to his less cultured son show that he had no neat power even of recalling, arranging, and narrating-all his experiences. Taking, for example, the account he gives of Baba's *Svecha marana* and return to the body in 1886, we see how poor his powers of narration are and perhaps also his powers of observation understanding and remembering incidents after 36 years passed. Anyhow, Mahlsapathy, after so many decades of his living with Baba. would surely have imbibed Baba's ahimsa and Baba's regard for life in every form. Incidentally one may note that it is not merely worship of creatures that is required for ore's equal vision and rising' to the '*Sarvam kaluidam Brahma*' plane. The inanimate world also including the mineral world must be treated as Brahman e, g. the earth, mountains, etc, B G. VII-47, Here comes the difficulty. How is one to treat a clod of earth as Brahman. One may retort, 'Are not persons worshipping a handful of clay moulded into the shape of an elephant faced Ganapati or of Kali for days and days, (though after Prana Pratishta ceremony) and feeling the presence of God in that object every year. If one can feel God in clay in a particular form, one may next proceed to view the same clay with-out that form us still being God, even when the clay has been thrown into the Ganges. It must be recalled that earth, air, fire, water, and ether, (which are parts of God's Apara Prakriti. B. G, VII 4 & 5) are all full of life, in some form or other, Life grades down from the human to the animal, thence into the vegetable, thence into the mineral life, and finally into the siderial life. It is easy for one acquainted with animal life, (from the science of physiology or Biology) to note vegetable life dealt with by the science of Botany. In studying these sciences, one notes that there are hybrid or indeterminable entities which one finds it difficult to bring under either of the heads specifically. There are some cells or objects which look like vegetables in one respect and animals in another; for instance, the fly eating flower, which catches at the fly as soon as it sits on it, dissolves it in its acid secretion and digests it exactly like an animal. Yet all the while it is only a plant, a vegetable. When vegetables eat animals, just as

animals eat vegetables, it is difficult to say that there is not the same life in both. Taking up cell and crystal life, it is very difficult to distinguish the mineral, the animal, and the human. Man is supposed to be able to draw geometrical figures, but the crystals beat man in their aesthetic perception and their unerring geometrical faculty of building up correct crystals even when intercepted. And beyond all mineral, there is the siderial life on which light is thrown by the recent ray research and atomic or nuclear fission. All objects known to us are : supposed to consist of atoms. 'A' (not), 'tomas' (to cut) is the derivation of the word 'atom', and the older chemists believed that matter goes down to a stage where it cannot be further cut, and that, they called the atom, But that atom has now been cut and nuclear fission reveals to us that inside a cell of an atom, what is contained is a Universe, protons and electrons of various sorts gyrating round and round and producing different results by their varieties of combination or position. The power generated by cutting an atom of uranium or hydrogen now threatens the peace and safety of the world and the gamma rays produced in the operation are the biggest Yama that science has revealed, more terrific than the Yama of Hindu mythology. The world's end, Pralaya, which is merely poetically described in Puranic Mythology is now an actual terrible spectre across the path of scientists and statesmen. Anyhow it is now scientifically proved that there is life in even the least bit of the Universe and, if power and intelligence be regarded as basic elements in God. worship of plant or the mineral is quite as easy as worship of the animal or the human being,

It is unsafe to generalise from a few facts of science and draw conclusions in the field of religion, but on the whole following Baba's guidance, one is safe in drawing the conclusion that, the Upanishidic declaration 'Sarvam kaluidam Brahma, and the Puranic direction that all creatures ought to be worshipped, are perfectly safe and legitimate for one to follow, under proper guidance. Mahlsapathy had the immense advantage of the company and guidance of Sai Baba and that was more than a University training for him, for it enabled him to rest securely on Baba's help and support for all his religious strivings and for life in general. When he died with "Ram" on his lips, it is quite clear that Mahlsapathy

had conquered his baser nature and advanced very far in his spiritual welfare under the guidance of Baba. Who has achieved more ?

While closing this chapter, we may stress certain points once again. An account of Mahlsapathy's training under Sai Baba may serve other purposes while noting the grand truths just stated. Some very orthodox people think that either it is impossible for them to use Sai Baba for their religious advancement as he was so heterodox and apparently a Muslim or that, in any case, there is no particular benefit to be gained by contact with him (Sai Baba) for the highly orthodox people to whom the Supreme Authority the Vedas, the Agamas, and the methods mentioned therein serve all the purposes that they can think of. With their sanctimony of acharas, pujas, and dhyana. they think that nothing more is left for them to do. Several orthodox gentlemen have asserted that Sai Baba cannot be of any use to them at all. Mahlsapathy's life and development under Sai Baba serve to prove the contrary. Those who are highly content with the steps they are taking in the orthodox direction with the use of their ancestral methods, images, etc., will find that Mahlsapathy also was a person of the same sort. If Mahlsapathy could derive very high benefit from Baba, others also can. Mahlsapathy had his Khandoba worship and Khandoba image inherited from his parents. Khandoba is an Avatar of Siva, and he had implicit faith in Khandoba and his religious practice was strict. His observance of fasts, feasts, and ceremonies was almost perfect. He had developed some powers such as leading the Khandoba purana and with its help informing people of Khandoba's message or reading for the future. He felt fully convinced that Khandoba was protecting him in everything. In short he had such intense faith in Khandoba that really Khandoba developed into a fairly perfect idea of God for him. As the Vedas point out, and as Baba also frequently pointed out, any name or form of God would become the perfect God that one needs. "Namaste Vayo." 'Tvameva Pratyaksham Brah-masi" is what the Vedic worshipper of Vayu said to Vayu. *i. e.* Obeisance to Thee, Wind-God! You alone are the Visible embodiment of Divinity (to me)." He found that the worship of Vayu, which is only one of the Forces of Nature, if carried on long enough and with sufficient

intensity, served his purpose, Similarly worshippers of Ganapati and other forms also thought that each form could be developed into full God under proper circumstances when the fullest *blaze* of devotion, faith and receptivity ensouled the devotee. In Mahlsapathy's case this was very well illustrated. He up to the last stuck to Khandoba and Khandoba protected him. Baba used the term Khandoba to mean God. For instance when addressing Upasani Baba, who was living in Khandoba temple, Baba said, 'After four years' service, Khandoba will give all his powers and make you perfect'. In the case of Mahlsapathy, his increased perfection was getting more and more patent to those associated with him. The heights of self-sacrifice that he reached were most astounding. His selflessness, which was copied by his wife and daughters, resulted in their being left them without the barest necessities, in some cases such as a woollen cover (Kambli). Yet he kept cheerful, contented and ready to crush out self-interest to protect others even if they should viciously work against his interest. Here is an instance reminding us of the Palestine Samartha's advice to do good to those who do evil and to give the person robbing you of a coat your cloak also.

When M lost his kambli and that was traced to a receiver of stolen property in another village where his daughter, who was there, traced it, that receiver swore that it was hers and not Mahlsapathy's. The Village Munsif said that she ought to be jailed and the property recovered. Mahlsapathy was shocked at the idea of seeing a woman jailed and tormented for the sake of recovering his "kambli", and so said he would not claim the property or say it was his—just as the saintly Bishop refused to claim the silver candle stick stolen by Jean Val Jean in Les Miserables.

Some people may fancy that self-abnegation carried to such severe extent may ruin the physical and material well being of the devotee and those depending on him. But here comes the service of Baba. Baba, the watchful the all knowing Providence who was always with him wherever he went, made sure that he and his dependants should not be irreparably damaged by his development of virtues, and therefore in every incident he came off safe. This will suffice to show that even for very orthodox people great help is derived in

proceeding on their accustomed lines of religious development by being in contact with or under the protection of the guardian angel Baba or rather of Sai Krishna who undertook to provide everything needed "Yoga Kshemam (B.G, IX 22). Even very orthodox and very devout persons would note how useful it is to have all one's affairs about body and family looked after by an omniscient, omnipresent and kind guardian. Several orthodox people fancy that God is looking after them and their families but are disappointed to note the absence of any provision in several cases. Such persons would gladly note that by resorting to Sai they find the same God that they have been appealing to comes under a new name ready to serve them and their purposes. God fulfils Himself in many ways.

YE yatha Maam Prapadyante.tams tathaiva bhajamyaham
Mama vartma Anuvartante manushyam partha sarvascha
Yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktam
Labhata cha tatah Kaman Mayaiva vihitan

BG VII(7)21-2

is what Sri Krishna said in the Gita. This means, In whatever from people surrender to Me, in that very form, I serve them. Every one following his own form of worship is really following My worship'. God can be approached under any name and in any manner, and Mahlsapathy, though sticking to the idea that Khandoba was his God, derived the advantage of getting all his other needs safeguarded and provided as far as possible by Baba acting as his Providence. Other bhaktas also who have their own particular forms, who however note the need or importance of food, shelter and other things for themselves and their families being provided by Baba, would be thus encouraged by Mahlsapathy's example to seek Baba and place themselves under his protection. Baba never interfered with anybody's orthodoxy or religious worship, and the orthodox now in various places need not have any fears about the loss of their existing spiritual position by contacting Baba. All the while, they would get unconscious expansion and refinement of their idea of God and gods, and become ready for reaching the "Ekam Sat".

Some of the readers of this sketch of Mahlsapathy may envy him in respect of his holy service to tie Guru & the resultant benefits both temporal and spiritual, and exclaim almost in the words of Thyagaraja,

(Mukhan-Rupaka)

Ehtanine Varnimtunu Sabari Bhagvamu

(or Bhakta Bhagyamu)

(i.e. How can I describe how great was the good fortune of Sabari, a hunter class hill tribe woman, who served and gave offerings to Sri Rama and thereby attained Moksha?)

But such envy and despair of emulating this Bhakta ought to be more usefully diverted into active channels of *service* of Sai Baba, who is still with us and carrying on his divine plan of helping people to attain virtue and Moksha. This book would be written in vain, if even a handful of readers or listeners are not hereby inspired to rise high in their devotion and service (to sai in any form, or he has all forms of Krishna, Rama Siva Marutyadi c.f. Ashtottara Namavali)

In concluding this chapter one more observation may be made throwing some light upon Baba's methods and ways. Mahlsapathy undoubtedly made a good end. In fact, he was fully conscious and knew when death was approaching, and told his friends 'I am going to Heaven'. He was fully conscious of the merit he had stored up as a Khandoba bhakta who had read Khandoba purana times without number, and made numerous pilgrimages to Jejuri, etc. What did Mahlsapathy mean when he said that he was going to Heaven at death? Readers will remember that when any pious man's death is announced, it is said that he has become a Kailasavasi if he is a Saivaite or Vaikuntavasi if he is a Vaishnavaita, that is, he has gone to the feet of the particular god whom he worshipped, which god is dwelling in Heaven, each god having his own Heaven. Siva has Kailas for His Heaven and Vishnu has Vaikunta. Jehova would have his own and other gods would have their own. In experience, the difference between these may be practically nothing, but yet most people believe that each Heaven is a place, separate from other Heavens, The Gita refers to these ideas and ideal; in Chapter VII, verses 20 to 23, which are worth deep study and cogitation

at the hands of every serious reader. First we shall mention what Mahlsapathy's ideas were as to his god and his Heaven, Mahlsapathy unwaveringly believed in the supremacy and power of his Ishta Devata, namely, Khandoba, who was a particular god in a particular place with a particular Form of bliss. When he tried to propitiate Khandoba by carrying his image in a palki with others, 150 miles to Jejuri and back, on a Sunday, he declared 'Our Khandoba does not want procession, he is out to-day being a Sunday enjoying himself with hunting on some hills', Therefore, his notion of Khandoba, in whome his soul was concentrated, was a god that delighted in hunting and wanted a particular hill on a particular day and so had a particular locality or Heaven in which he would be rejoicing and his bhaktas would rejoice with him. This is more or less the outline or rough explanation of what Mahlsapathy meant by saying that he would go to Heaven on the day of his death. No doubt he worshipped Vittal, Scani, Ganapati, and Baba- But none of them deeply entered into his soul and captured him like Khandoba. They were all fit to be worshipped or respected like the relations of a husband whom a woman respects though it is only the husband whom she embraces. The exact connection between one god and another, the exact definition of our divine ideas, is not possible at least to most persons in ordinary circumstances. Accepting, current Hindu, Christian and other ideas, we might state that Khandoba was Mahlsapathy's chief God though in a way, he recognised that Sankar, Scani, etc., were also Gods and should be respected. Adopting current ideas we would be entitled to say that perhaps Khandoba was Mahlsapathy's God in the sense in which Bhagavad Gita uses the term 'god' in verses 20 to 23 of Chapter VII. In verse 20 the Gita points out how by strong desire based perhaps upon innumerable repetitions or habit, one's ideas are pulled away in the direction of worshipping one particular god other than Lord Krishna or the Supreme. The Prakriti or Nature (formed by habit) compels these persons to be at their particular god other than Krishna. In verse 21 Lord Krishna says, far from objecting to this, he approves and seals this attitude. Whichever Murti (all Murtis are -but forms of the Supreme) a devotee wishes to

worship with faith in it, the Lord develops his faith therein. Verse 22 adds 'with that faith that devotee pleases that god and obtains particular gains or desires of his, and these are according to the order of the Supreme.' Verse 23 adds 'At death, those who worship particular gods go unto them, and those who worship the Supreme in the form of Krishna go unto Him.' We may infer from the above that so long as a man makes a difference between the Supreme and his Ishta Murthi and insists upon following the particular form suited to gain his Ishta Murti's favour, he goes in the end to the feet of his Ishta Murti which, of course, is Heaven, Heaven being a relative term which would apply to the position or level occupied by any of the gods. Therefore when Mahlsapathy said that he was going to Heaven, he had undoubtedly Khandoba at the back of his mind and was reaching Khandoba. After all, as Baba made no difference between Khandoba and the Supreme and also added. 'I am God,' i.e. Aham Brahmasmi', Baba is the same as Khandoba. When a man goes on unconsciously differentiating between one form of God and another, whether that is harmful or less advantageous is not a question that need be discussed here. As stated in the Gita, when a man starts all right, he goes ultimately to the Supreme. From the Upanishads one sees that those who go according to the lines of Kramamukti go on from loka to loka till they gain Brahman or Brahma loka that is, till they reach the Supreme. Tai U II (8) Brih U ch. VI (2) 13-16. These are highly abstract and metaphysical or theological distinctions and discussions. Some readers may not like to have any of such discussions while others may want them very much. That is why the matter is raised at all and why it is left not fully discussed in this paragraph. To understand Sai Baba aright, we have to study all phases of the bhakta at all his stages and even his final stage. The end reached by Mahlsapathy and that reached by H.S.Dixit and some others are briefly set fourth in this volume. Some readers might try to analyse these and see what Baba's methods are in developing a devotee and leading him on to the supreme end. It is not necessary now to decide whether Mahlsapathy reached the Supreme end in 1922 or at any any later date.

Nahi Kalyanakrit kaschit Durgatim Tata Gachchati

That is, 'No one following the right path need fear that he would attain-a bad end. There is God, Lord Krishna or Lord Sai to see to it that everyone reaches the right end'. We are sure of that, and this analysis only helps those who wish to have some more light or religious speculation or discussion to satisfy themselves. We should never dogmatise on these matters—especially when the account given of the various lokas in the above and other Upanishads and the Itihasas and puranas are so puzzling and apparently irreconcilable.

CHAPTER II

Narayan Govind Chandorkar

Nana Saheb Chandorkar is the next of the most prominent amongst Baba's bhaktas, not merely because he was sent for, and the only one openly sent for, by Baba and specially trained and prepared for his mission, but also because of his magnificent work and grand personality. He was the first and foremost of Baba's apostles whose labour was the basis of the spread of Sai faith for many decades. If Mahlsapathy was the seed, Chandorkar was the stem and trunk of the spreading Banyan of Baba, i.e. Baba's St. Paul. A study of his relations with Baba, and the way in which Baba moulded him is a typical and highly useful study of Baba's methods for advancing educated disciples and of Baba's work for society.

Chandorkar was born of highly respected parents, who were good and pious Hindus, held in high esteem in their social circles and following the sastras to the best of their ability. They did their daily Vaiswadeva and fed Atithis, i.e. kept open house; and visitors to Kalyan expected to be and were actually welcomed and fed by them as guests. His father was a retired Government officer, and had built a decent storeyed building there, the Chandorkar Wada, which became, and which still continues to be, the family mansion for so many generations. Chandorkar's capacity and talents can be seen from the fact that by twenty he was already a graduate, and that entering Government service at once he rose to the position of a Gazetted officer, a Deputy Collector, in seven years, which was in those days considered (and must be considered even now) to be an exceptional or marvellous feat. His conduct, character, and spiritual fitness were

those of a good Hindu. He had taken up Philosophy for his special subject for the B. A. degree and supplemented his college study by careful attention to the Bhagvad Gita with Sankara Bhashya.

In these and other ways, he was anxious to get the best out of the Hindu sastras for his own moral and spiritual equipment and progress. His basic equipment being so good, what was wanted was only the hand of a perfect master to turn him into a brilliant apostle, one high up in the spiritual ladder. Even under ordinary circumstances he would have shone well in life but with Baba for his Guru and guide, he shone resplendently well, and he was known throughout the Bombay Presidency as a gentleman of an excellent and noble character and of great attainments, and was revered as a Guru by eminent devotees like Sri B.V. Dev and others. His case illustrates the truth of the saying that it is not the sishya that seeks the Guru but very often the reverse. It was the Guru who sought him out. He had no idea of his previous births. But his Guru Sri Sai Baba was full of jnana. That is, he had *Rnambhara Prajna* or *Pratibha*. The present, past and future floated before Sai Baba's mind's eye, if we may so term it, as one moment, and he could see every bit of it clearly. He remembered that in the past four janmas N G Chandorkar was his sishya; and so he was determined to make the pupil continue the contact and derive further benefit till he achieved life's goal. That is why he sent for him even though he (Baba) did not care ordinarily to meet persons in high official position which, in his eyes, counted for nothing at all. The details of Baba's invitation and its fate are fully set out in Part 1. But as each part may be studied independently of the others, we may summarise the facts about that invitation.

The karnam or Kulkarni of Shirdi, Appa Kulkarni, went to take leave of Baba before leaving Shirdi for Kopergaon where Nana Chandorkar, the Collector's chitnis, was camping for jamabandi. The diffident karnam finally undertook the task of inviting his big officer to his hamlet. When he actually mentioned the matter to the officer, the latter could not believe that a fakir would invite a DC or chitnis and declined to visit Shirdi. Nothing daunted by the rebuff, Baba repeated the invitation a second time, and when it failed, even for a third

time. At last, Nana agreed to see Baba at Shirdi, came up and inquired why he was sent for. Baba's answer was that for four janmas he had been connected with Baba, and Baba desired that he should renew the contact. As Nana still hesitated to renew his contact, Baba revealed to Nana his watch over his interests using his *pranbha* and other powers to foresee or control the future. The Collector was pressing Nana to inoculate himself with a new serum against Plague that was playing havoc with public health. Nana feared the inoculation and hastened to Baba to get his assurance about the safety of the operation; and Baba gave it. Again his father's objections to a Moslem's connection with any one in his family was an apparently insurmountable obstacle. But it was overcome by Baba's power to control the father's mind. Baba made the latter approve of Nana's acceptance of Baba (apparently a Moslem, for he lived in the Masjid) for his Guru.

Having sent for Nana, Baba did everything to see that the course was properly begun. The first essential of progress under a Guru is faith. We need not go into Dasabodha or other standard works to define or describe the sishyas' (the disciples') qualifications. It is enough for us to note what Baba himself has declared and stressed as the important qualifications. The first and foremost is complete faith (*Nishta*) and the second is *Saburi* i.e. patient, cheerful awaiting the future with self-possession. One must get to believe that the Guru is full of all divine power, divine mercy and love, directed especially towards the pupil. So Nana had to be impressed with Baba's divine nature and Baba's personal interest in him or attachment to him. As for nature, Baba declared time and again that He is God, that is, that he has completely realised God or merged his identity with not merely the Impersonal Brahman but also the Personal God known under various names and forms such as Lakshminarayan, Hari, etc. Baba has used the terms, 'Maim Ailah hun' and 'I am Lakshminarayan' etc. as synonymous. To Baba, God is the same under or without any name and form (most of us firmly believe in differences of personality in God according to Name and Form). What are the nature and powers, etc. of Lakshminarayan? Every one knows Lakshminarayan is a form or name of "Maha Vishnu", the supreme Iswara's

Protecting Aspect though it is inseparable from creation and salvation, which are the other aspects. So, Baba's mission and work, as Lakshminarayan, were and are to protect devotees anywhere and everywhere and under all conditions. Baba declared (see Baba's Charters & Sayings)—

'My eye (of vigilant supervision) is ever on those who love me.

Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind that I am always aware of everything you do.

If one ever meditates on me, repeats my name, sings my deeds, and is thus *transformed into me, one's karma is destroyed, I stand by his side always*’.

[What is this but Divinity?—Divine Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence and Mercy.]

Thus, it was Baba's lookout to see that his nature and attitude towards his devotees should be thoroughly well impressed upon Nana's mind- Baba was watching over not merely Nana but numerous others and looking after their welfare. But we shall just now note first how he dealt with Nana so as impress him deeply with this divine (Gurudeva) function of his.

Baba's work (like most divine work) is subtle (sukshma), unseen, easily forgotten, and not properly interpreted. See Kena Upa 9, 14—26 where gods fail to see God's working through them to attain victory or to make out God's manifestation in a particular form. Note also how few realised God in Rama Avatar during his life time. So Baba had to repeat his efforts to ensure the thorough fixing of these valuable truths and impressions in Chandorkar's mind. The most common and trifling things one would suppose in the list of an ordinary man's needs are water to drink and food to eat. Yet at times these assume extraordinary importance, and provisions of drink or food under extremely difficult circumstances becomes clearly a kind act of Divine Providence. This was done for Nana Saheb Chandorkar by Baba under very peculiar circumstances.

Chandorkar was an orthodox Hindu, and, in spite of his corpulence, anxious to visit hill tops where there were temples. Harischandra Hill, forty miles away from Shirdi, was a noted hill with a Devi's shrine at the top. But the long stretch of barren rock between that temple and the bottom of the hill was one

vast treeless, wild, rocky waste, where there was neither water to drink nor any shelter to hide in. Over that hill, Nana was climbing on a hot, summer day, and, after he had gone some distance, the heat of the sun and the toil of the journey told upon him. He felt very thirsty and asked the Sheristadar friend by his side for water.

The latter replied that there was none and that it was a barren rock. Nana felt the fatigue of climbing also greatly and said he could not climb. The Sheristadar asked him to climb down. But Nana was unable to do that either and quietly sat on a huge slab and exclaimed 'if Baba were here, he would surely give me water to slake my thirst'. The Sherishtadar, who was by his side, remarked that such observations about 'ifs' were useless. He added 'Baba is not here. What is the good of thinking what would happen if he were here?' The Sherishtadar had only fleshy eyes and matter-bound brains. He could not see with the eye of faith. If he had such an eye, he could have noted the presence of Baba not only on Harischandra hill but in every other place also. Chandorkar was in a slightly better position than the Sherishtadar. It is because of his faith in Baba that the thought occurred to him that Baba could save him even on that barren rock. But he did not feel certain that Baba was there and that water would be provided. Anyhow his thought of Baba was the tiny hairspring or switch working the magic, the turn that saved the situation.

Prayer saves. But what are prayers but thoughts? Many a person fancies that he must put forward a definite demand in prayer to the 'highest' powers and get it granted by force of prayer. There is some truth in this mixed up with much error and confusion. What comes often after prayer and is supposed to be the result of prayer, is very often something fixed up by a higher power which, as part of its plan, produces the thought of prayer first. Prayer often proves to be the immediate predecessor, but not the efficient and direct cause of the result. '*Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*' (i.e. 'After that; therefore due to that') is what we frequently say and believe. Many a man says 'I prayed; I got it. So it is prayer that got it'. But this is neither logically nor theologically sound. The fact is that prayer is a means of placing one in contact with higher beneficent powers and there it

serves its primary purpose. Incidentally when a devout soul is deeply concentrating on God, what happens is that the soul gets so thoroughly saturated with the divine that divine power infiltrates into the Jiva and the combined power or the higher power (both are the same, despite difference in names) produces certain results. It is the man of prayer that draws down divinity, i.e. turns divine at the moment of intense prayer and is responsible for certain results (*Etad hyeva aksharam jnaatwa yo yad ichchati tasya tatKhat U.I (2) 16*) 16, i.e. Having realised the Imperishable, if one has desire, that is fulfilled, even when the results have not been previously fixed up, as the result of previous karma. Anyhow, Chandorkar's thought and longing constituted a good prayer on account of its earnest faith and contact with Supreme Power and Mercy.

It is always good to pray, because it brings one in contact with God. The prayer, however, that is found most common in society is occasional prayer for a definite material object, and there it stops. It is always advisable to avoid the commercial spirit when dealing with God. We should not bargain with God. Nor should we say, 'I will pray to you only for such and such an object being gained'. The thought of God purifies the soul, and the purified soul gets power to draw God more and more into it. The commercialised soul, if too much oppressed with the contemplation of the worldly benefit is handicapping itself and preventing its purification, that is, saturation with God idea (purity means having God-idea and impurity is lack of God or God-idea). The very idea of material objects may so obsess a mind as practically to obliterate the thought of God. God then becomes only a secondary consideration, a sort of side element, a weak coloration when the main object before the mind's eye is worldly gain. Such approaches are deplorable, however attractive the object to be gained by prayer may be. One ought to have prayer without concentrating too much on worldly gains. Concentration on God alone is purity. Purity means power, and when a soul is thoroughly pure, then the objects entertained in the mind of the prayerful soul some time previously, that is even before the prayer began, remain in the subconscious, i.e. at the back of the praying party's mind and may come to fruition by the power of the purified and strengthened soul. This is an incidental

benefit which ought not to turn the scales when one considers how he should pray. Prayer is primarily and essentially only an affair of the soul with God. All intervention of outside objects is an interference with the soul's concentration on God. Prayer must be purified by very keen practice—i.e, it must be shorn of all undesirable gross elements just as we keep off the floating moss repeatedly when we bathe in a tank. In cases where however one is in dire extremity and prayer comes out from him for a much needed object, in spite of oneself, as was the case with Chandorkar on the Harischandra hill, then prayer cannot be condemned at all. Prayer is a natural vent for the heart. We leap out at what we want on the wings of prayer. It is God Himself that has implanted this tendency to seek God's help to attain objects of great importance to one's material or spiritual life and each time we so seek, we should stress in our mind that God is our first and final object and that other objects form a temporary and partial diversion or screen.

Let us see, how the thought of Chandorkar on the Harischandra hill intensified by his dire thirst operated. His thought was very intense and even if it had been less intense, when it was directed to Sai, it must have had immediate effect. That could not be seen by the Sherishtadar or by Chandorkar himself on the hill. Let us see what took place at Shirdi where the body of Sai Baba was physically situated. Sai Baba spoke out immediately in the presence of some devotees, 'Hallo, Nana is very thirsty. Should we not give him a handful of water?' To Baba all places and all times were open before his vision, and he could see and hear everything. But the persons around him, who had not the benefit of such a vision, were wondering why Baba should talk of Nana's thirst. Nana the Deputy Collector was not there, and if the Deputy Collector was in thirst, why a palmful, gallons of water would be quickly brought to him by number of persons. Why did Baba talk like that? People round about Baba could not make it out. Nor did Baba care to explain. But what followed on the hill gives the explanation. A little time after Nana made his exclamation about Baba, a Bhil, that is, a hill tribesman, was seen coming down the hill towards the party, that is, Chandorkar and his friends. Chandorkar accosted him and said 'Hallo! I am thirsty; can I get some water to

drink?' People wondered that this Brahmin Deputy Collector should accost a Bhil, who his considered an untouchable or a low-caste man, and ask him for water. But necessity knows no law, and the Bhil's reply was most surprising. He said, 'What! You ask for water! Under the very slab or rock on which you are seated, there is water'. So saying, he moved away and disappeared from view. Nana's subordinates and friends who were with him immediately set about lifting up the slab after Nana moved aside, and lo.and behold! There was just palmful of water on that rock, attractive and cool, just the quantity that is necessary to save a man from fiery thirst. Nana took that water, his thirst was gone; and he was able to march higher up and complete his pilgrimage.

After the hill ascent, the goddess' darsan at the temple and descent were over, some days later, Nana had occasion to go to Shirdi and as he stepped into Baba's Dwarakamayee the very first words that Baba uttered to him before anybody could inform him about Nana's experience on the hill, were these, 'Nana, you were thirsty; I gave you water; did you drink?' Nana's eyes opened with joyous wonder. He felt that his very thought of Baba had worked as a prayer and the appearance of the Bhil and his pointing out where the water was and the appearance of the water there on a waterless rock must all have been due to Baba. How Baba managed it, Baba only knew. And to confirm Nana in his view, devotees at Shirdi mentioned to him that on the memorable day and hour when he was on the Harischandra hill, with burning thirst, Baba spoke the above words. Nana was convinced more than ever that Baba was God omnipresent, merciful and omnipotent, for he had the power to bring water under a rock and a man to show it just at the exact psychological moment. This conclusion of his might perhaps appear to be too weak for a logician versed in inductive logic to accept. 'An individual instance does not prove a rule and guarantee the validity of a universal proposition' is what the logician would remark. But Nana was not pestered by doubts of Tarka sastra or logic. In the circumstances of Nana, there could be no room for doubting that Baba did respond to his very thought, which was an appeal for aid and did provide him with the water which was a necessity

to save his life at that perilous juncture. His faith was confirmed and grew stronger and stronger.

The unfortunate fact about most of us is that as most educated minds are fed on the Cartesian principle of doubting everything, the logician's axiom about insufficiency of individual cases to prove universal propositions and other similar doubts crop up over and over again. When 150 experiences of Baba's help had been derived by a man, on the occurrence of the 151st case of help, even a well-known devotee asked himself the question, 'Is this chance or is this Baba's help?' This wretched idea of 'chance helping' does not easily leave us. Luckily most of us by Baba's favour have some grounding in faith, and we gradually shake off the tendency to go on doubting and doubting for ever. Except for that, we would become "*Samscayatmas*", that is, persons in whose nature, doubt becomes a fixed trait, a part of their second nature. The Gita (BG IV 40) says, *Samscayatma Vinascyati*, that is. The man who goes on doubting and doubting *ad infinitum* will perish'. 'Perish' does not necessarily mean 'die', so far as the physical body is concerned. He is dead already whose faith is dead. A man that has no faith is a breathing corpse. Even in ordinary worldly matters, we find what an important part is played by our ability to believe what is reported to us. If in a new place before reaching the railway station, we have to ask for the road to the station at half a dozen places and answers are given, if at each answer we think that the answer may be false and hesitate, we should never reach the station in time to catch our train. This is the meaning of *Samscayatma Vinascyati*. Luckily in the case of Nana, far from his being a '*Samscayatma*', he was a *Shraddhatma*.

*Shraddhaavan labhate jnanam tatparah samyata indriyah
Jnanam labdhva paraam scaantim achirena adhigachchati.*

BG IV. 39

This means, The man of faith obtains knowledge and wisdom. Being a person who controls his senses and thereby effectively fixes his mind on that jnana, treating it as the goal of his life, he obtains Jnana; and having obtained it he soon reaches *scanti*, Supreme Peace.' This has an obvious application to Nana's case, and Nana, with very little of doubting nature, advanced in the strength of

his faith, obtained more and more of wisdom (Jnana) by the grace of Baba and was progressing rapidly towards that *scanti* or Peace, which is the goal of all spiritual life and endeavour.

Thus Nana was convinced that Baba had superhuman power, superhuman love, and made superhuman provision of needs for those who were attached to him and whom he loved. So, he found that Baba was really a Deva (God), and that Baba was preeminently fitted to take charge now of Nana's life, of his comfort, and of all his concerns, temporal and spiritual. Thus convinced, Nana was perfectly prepared to take the plunge of *Prapatti* to the Gurudeva, to surrender himself unhesitatingly to the directions of Baba, being perfectly assured that no harm would result thereby, and on the other hand much good—nay every good—would result therefrom.

Having provided for the thirst of Nana in one place, Baba marvellously provided for his hunger in another place. In Padmalaya forest, there is a Ganapati temple. It is ten miles away from the nearest Railway Station and the access to it is through ten miles of forest. Nana had made arrangements for all this, but trains have got a queer way of being late, and in this case, his train being many hours late, all arrangements were upset and there was no conveyance and no assistance forthcoming. Nana's arrival at the railway station was evening time, very near dusk. But he would not be thwarted. He determined to push along with his companions to the temple, come what may. In the absence of any conveyance, Nana had to dare and dared the risk and trouble of walking ten miles to reach the Ganapati temple. So he trudged on. But when he was about half way or more than half way, it was already 9 p.m. and the pujari of the temple would usually lock it up by 9 or 10 p.m. and retire to his cottage at some distance for his night's rest. So, Nana doubted whether he would get into the temple at all. Further, having walked wearily six or seven miles, he felt the pangs of hunger. Naturally he remembered Baba. He prayed, 'Baba, I am not asking for much. I am not overgreedy. I will be quite satisfied if, at the close of this journey, I can get one cup of tea to quench my hunger'. Then he and his companions trudged on. It was nearly 11 p.m. when they reached the temple.

Instead of the temple being closed (as it would usually be) the pujari was on the watch, and on seeing persons at a great distance (that is, Nana's party) coming, shouted. 'Is Nana coming?' It would be highly impertinent on the part of any priest to call a Deputy Collector by his pet name, as though he was his chum. But here there was no feeling of resentment, but one of gratification on the part of Nana and his friends when they heard the voice, 'Is Nana coming?' They approached and said, 'Yes. How do you know that Nana is coming?' Then the priest said, "I had an ethereal message from Sri Sai Baba in which he said, 'My Nana is coming weary, thirsty, and hungry. Keep for him one cup of tea'. Here is tea ready for you all." He then gave Nana his cup. This again proved that Baba's eye of supervision was not merely on hills but also in forests to look after the safety, comfort and health of his beloved devotee. Alike from danger of thirst and hunger, Baba had saved him.

What was it that saved Nana? The Sanskrit stanza says—

Vane rane scatru jalaagnimadhye

Mahaarnave, parvata mastakevaa

Suptam pramattam vishama sthitamvaa

Rakshanti punyani puraakritaani

This means, whether it is in the forests or in the battle field or amidst foes or in the ocean, or on hill tops, the merit acquired in former times or janmas saves a person even though he may be sleeping, disordered in mind or unbalanced. This is an abstract statement, which is very true. But abstractions do not save any one. It is the concrete person called Sai that actually saved Nana both on hill top and in the thick forests and not abstract poorva punya. After all, it is poorva punya (former merit) that had taken shape as Sai's body, which had undertaken the responsibilities of a Gurudeva and which therefore saved Nana. So it is alike poorva punya and also Gurudeva that saved Nana.

While on this subject we may point out the conclusions into which people fall when dealing with questions where the abstract and the concrete or the particular and the universal or the part and the whole blend as they invariably and necessarily do. I may say that I stir the milk with my right hand, emphasizing

'right' or I may say with equal truth that I stir the milk with a spoon in my right hand. Both are the same and not conflicting, and similarly a particular person protecting a devotee is not inconsistent with his poorva punya protecting him. Forgetting this obvious truth, recently at the Thotapalli hills (Visakhapatnam District) there was a confused distinction without difference. A lady, who was proceeding at dusk from Sri Omkar Swami's chambers to her own room, trod on a snake, and cried out "Om Sai". The snake did not strike her, but bent its head and went away quietly. Some said, 'This is Sai's protection'. Others said 'This is poorva punyam protection'. The obvious truth is that the poorva punyam of the lady taking the shape of her contact with Sai, saved her. Similarly in the above two cases of Chandorkar's troubles in forest and hill, it is his poorva punyam that saved him, in accordance with the above stanza. The poorva punyam in Chandorkar's case was continuous punyam, a punyam which tended to perpetuate itself because it consisted of a surrender to a most loving and beloved Guru, janma after janma, who took it on himself to protect his disciple right through in every detail, and that too life after life.

We shall see how the loving Guru's supervision and watch helped Nana Chandorkar in his latest birth (which is the one janma known to us) in matter after matter essential for his temporal and spiritual safety. Baba having implanted in Chandorkar sufficiently strong faith in and reliance on the Guru was constantly watering this plant with fresh instances of his loving watch and care. Even in apparently trivial matters such as catching trains and meeting official superiors, Baba (as was usual with him) showed his concern for the disciple and helped him as also so many devotees. It is this enduring and endless concern of the Guru that grips the disciple, and makes him understand God.

Nana Chandorkar and Haridas, a Kirtankar, were both at Shirdi, and both had to be at Ahmednagar the next day, and so had to catch a train, the scheduled time of which required their immediate leaving of Shirdi. So they went to take leave of Baba. Baba quietly told them both, 'You had better take your meal and then go for your train' Nana, having implicit reliance on his Guru did so, though it took some time for him to take his meal. Haridas did not wish to risk the

loss of money which he would get at the next day's engagement, and so, remembering the scheduled time and not Baba's words (on which he did not place much reliance), started off immediately without food and reached Kopergaon station and waited there for some hours, for the train was late by some hours. Baba knowing the lateness by his Antarjnana (or Ritambhara Prajna) gave the benefit of his knowledge to Nana who went up leisurely after meal, and found Haridas waiting at the station with a hungry stomach, for the late train. Nana was in time to catch the train, and Haridas learnt a lesson, which he no doubt would preach to others but did not practise himself, namely, that one must put implicit faith in Great Souls like the Guru Sai Deva, and not throw aside their words and rely upon one's own wisdom. This is the correct interpretation of the last line of the Niti sloka:-*Ushas Sasamsca Gargyastu, Sakunamtu Brihaspatih, Manojayamtu Maandavyo, Vipravakyam Janardhanah,* which means :—

(When one wishes to consult augury of success before starting on any action) Gargya praised starting at dawn; Brihaspati held omens e.g. flight of birds etc. to be the best guide; Mandavya held one's own's optimism and powerful determination were the best guides; Janardhana (Sri Krishna) viewed the words of the *Vipra* or holy ones as the best [Baba was a *Vipra* in the best and every sense of the term]. Baba also taught Nana incidentally another lesson before he left Shirdi (saying), 'Look at this Haridas. He comes with you. He leaves you behind and runs away for his own (fancied) advantage. You must always have friends who will not desert you in the middle like this'.

Another incident also may be quoted here. Nana was staying with Baba at Shirdi and wanted to start one morning to go to Kopergaon, where he had an appointment to meet the Collector. When he went to take leave of Baba in proper time, Baba simply said, 'Go tomorrow'. That meant, leave was denied. Others with less faith than Nana would have simply brushed aside Baba's advice and started off. But Nana had full faith in Baba, and consequently the advantage of staying one more day with Baba. Having been stopped for that day, he took leave of Baba the next day. Baba then said, 'You now go and meet the Collector'

When Nana went to Kopergaon and enquired of the office staff there as to what happened the previous day, they said that the Collector had sent a telegram that he was not coming that day but only on the following day. Baba did not receive a copy of the telegram, but by his own Antarjnana knew of the postponement of the appointment and gave Nana the benefit of it with the resulting further benefit of an extra day's stay with his Guru. Thus even in the most important official matters, Nana's faith made him follow Baba's words with great advantage to himself, temporally and spiritually.

Nana's benefit in temporal matters from Baba was not merely for himself but also for persons connected with him. Baba who saved Nana from the pangs of hunger and thirst in hill and forest would certainly not leave his disciple when his life was in danger. See the Bhagavata verse below that "He is no Guru who does not save one's life".

Gurur na sasyat svajano na sasyat

Pita na sasyat janani na sasyat

svapatir na sasyat Na mochayet

yas samupeta mrityum

which means, "If a person does not save one's life, when it is threatened by Death, that person is not a Guru, a kinsman, a father, a mother, a god or a husband".

Such a juncture arrived one day when Nana and Lele Sastri were starting from Poona in a tonga. They had gone a few miles when suddenly the horse reared, and the carriage capsized. That was a perilous moment. Both the occupants of the carriage were corpulent elderly people who would in such an accident ordinarily suffer serious damage to life and limb. Sai Baba, however, who was watching over Nana wherever he went, at that very moment blew what is called 'Bum-Bum', (the Conch sound—for at death people blow on the conch), keeping his hands in front of his mouth as though the hands were a conch. This is a signal of danger and distress. We shall give the account as it appears in the Gospel of Baba (See B. C. & S. 535-A).

535-A. One day at Shirdi, Baba made the dolorous Sankha sound (indicative of coming death) and said "Hallo, Nana is about to die! But, will I let him die?" At that time, N.G. Chandorkar and Lele Sastri were near Poona. They were in a tonga the horse of which reared and overturned the tonga. N.G.C. and Sastri were in peril of their life. But they picked themselves up and found that they had suffered no injury. When they reached Shirdi, they found that Baba had made the above declaration and had saved their lives.

Thus Baba saved Nana's life, just as Baba's Guru saved Baba's life. There is a saying that the string of a flower garland borrows its scent. Similarly Lele Sastri, who was not himself a staunch bhakta of Baba, derived his safety from his company with Nana Chandorkar. Baba on this occasion proved the truth of his statement (see B. C. S. 35 & 301) "If a devotee is about to fall, I stretch out my hands, and thus with four outstretched hands at a time, support him. I will not let him fall*. This is *Karavalambha*.

(1) *Na me bhaktah pranascyati*, i.e. My devotee shall not perish (BG IX-31).

(2) *Tan Vddharishyeham achirat Apatbhyo nowriva arnavat* i.e. I quickly save them as a boat saves in the ocean. SB XI (17)

It is not merely the friend of a devotee that Baba saves. Baba's interest is in every one in whom a devotee is interested. Nana was deeply interested in the fate, health, and life of his daughter Minatai. About 1904 or so, Nana Chandorkar was Deputy Collector at Jamner (then unconnected by train with Jalgaon). He was at Jamner along with his pregnant daughter, whose pregnancy was in a very advanced state. Unexpectedly the delivery, being the first delivery, proved troublesome and risky. The pains were prolonged for many long hours, and the poor young lady suffered torture. What could poor Nana do? He knew that Baba was aware of everything, and that there was no necessity to send a telegram or letter to him. So, he must do what he could in his own place. Being a very orthodox and pious Brahmin, he started a *Kashtanivaarana Homa* with the help of his Sastri. Still no relief was obtained. All the while, Baba was fully aware of what was going on at Jamner. At evening time, he called Ramgir Bua, a Gosavi, whom he used to call 'Babugir'. That Babugir was about to start away from there

but Baba commissioned him to go to Jamner first, in order to deliver to Nana Chandorkar a packet of udhi and a set of papers containing Bhisma's Aratis for the puja of Baba, modelled on the Pandharpur Aratis. Some one present handed over Rs. 2/- to the Gosavi to enable him to perform this journey. That Gosavi complained that the rail portion of his journey, namely, Kopergaon to Jalgaon, itself would take up Rs. 1-14-0 leaving only a balance of 2 annas to cover the ordinary road journey of 30 miles. Baba simply told him, 'Babugir, go, everything will be provided'. (See B.C.&S.31&535 C). Accordingly the Gosavi started. He got down at Jalgaon and was in a quandary. Railway officials were troubling visitors coming by train from infected areas, with a view to enforce quarantine rules, and there was no method by which he could escape them and go to Jamner. Suddenly he found a liveried peon bawling out, "Who is Babugir from Shirdi?" Then this Bua said, "I am Ramgir Bua whom Baba used to call 'Babugir'. And I am from Shirdi". Then that peon said that he had been sent by his "master" with a tonga and a horse to fetch him to Jamner. He gave him a meal also. Babugir fancied that Baba had sent word or wired to Chandorkar, and thus provided conveyance and meal for him. The distance of 30 miles was soon covered up by the tonga, and when very near Nana's quarters the carriage stopped, the peon told Bua, "There is the master's house; you had better go". Babugir got down for a natural purpose and when he turned back and looked, there was no peon, no horse, no carriage, nothing at all. How they could disappear on a clearly visible road, he could not understand. But anyhow right in front of him was the Deputy Collector's house. So he went there and found the Deputy Collector and his wife waiting. They had heard the rattle of a horse and carriage and were anxiously waiting. Babugir handed over to Nana the udhi saying, 'This is Baba's udhi sent to you for your daughter's sake'. At once the udhi was applied to Minatai, and thereafter it was no longer Minatai that was crying but her new born child, for she had easy delivery. The arati paper also was handed over to Nana for his approval, so that it might be used at Baba's puja at Shirdi, When Bua thanked the Deputy Collector for his timely sending of the candle and food, Nana was taken aback. He said he was not aware of anybody coming from Shirdi and

so he did not send anything. Then it was that both Baba and the Deputy Collector understood what Baba meant when he said 'Go, Babugir, everything will be provided'. It was Baba's extraordinary powers that provided the carriage, the horse, the live tied peon and the meal, without Chandorkar knowing anything about them. This shows how deeply Baba was interested in the welfare of Nana's family, and how he took upon himself and used his mysterious powers to help him in such extremities as a difficult parturition in a far off place like Jamner at a time when no proper medical aid was available. Thus Baba saved not merely Chandorkar's life but also the life of those connected with or dependent on him, by the use of all his superhuman powers.

Baba helped Chandorkar in other matters also. As even many present day devotees know, Baba takes charge of all affairs (including the apparently trivial affairs) of those who surrender to him and depend on him. That watch, care and provision by Baba form not merely the cause of surrender but also a very essential factor in keeping up surrender and leading a one to Laya. But we shall not enter into these minor details.

We shall take up the larger question of how Baba helped Nana in his spiritual course. Merely saving the physical life of Nana and those dependent on him would not suffice. Baba's work was to save his soul and train it to enable it to reach its goal. We shall see how Baba used every little occasion to help him. Even in temporal matters Baba's interference and help had a very good spiritual effect. Nana who noted how Baba's powers were vast, how he was watching him and his people from enormous distances and provided the necessary help in mysterious and apparently superhuman ways, soon began to get deeper and deeper realisation of Baba's divine nature. Baba's powers were far above the human level or limit just as Baba's love and supervision of many were far above the human level. None of us can take interest in even a dozen at a time and look after their affairs. Baba, however, was looking after the interests of hundreds or thousands of devotees, disciples and bhaktas and keeping watch over them all at all times and in distant and different quarters that they occupied. (See B.C.S. 479, saving 4000 persons & 35). This sort of power to know and power to protect

can only be called divine. No other term would fit (for this omnipotence, omniscience and ubiquity). Thus, while Nana was getting temporal help, he was also at the same time getting spiritual help, as he derived a very strong impression that Baba was nothing but God, that God in the abstract (Brahman) dealt with in the Upanishads (*Kend*) is not really accessible or available to people, even if they worshipped Him in the form of images, and that unless and until God took the *rupam* or form of a Gurudeva like Sai Baba, God was a remote unrecognizable or practically unfelt object. Nana noted how his poorva punya had crystallised itself into the very powerful (B C S 90-99) and highly loving Sai Baba. So we shall proceed to consider further how and in what other ways this all loving and all watching Baba promoted the spiritual and temporal welfare of Nana.*

"The feeling that one is always under the watching eye and protection of a Divine power that looks after the trivial and the important concerns of one alike and makes him successful and happy in everything has come to many Sai Bhaktas and they are constantly reporting it to Sai Sudha and the author. Has this protection and guidance and grant of success anything to explain it? Is there any parallel to it in our

The most essential part of man's nature is the ego. But in his endeavour to derive the best out of his physical life, a man's ego ordinarily runs riot and manifests itself in anti-social and anti-moral ways. Lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy, are all the various manifestations of this ego, and each of these has to be put down, and the danger of allowing free scope to these must be rubbed into the soul of the disciple so that he may become a fit person to attain life's goal.

Regarding this, much instruction has been imparted openly and in hidden or mysterious ways by Sai Baba to devotees like Nana Chandorkar, and we shall do well to study the way in which the lessons were taught while benefiting by the lessons themselves. But before proceeding to deal with each of them, we must remember that we are dealing with human nature, and that the so-called

Shadriput, (i.e. Six Enemies)⁴ namely, *Kama* or Lust, *Krodha* or Anger, *Lobha* or Greed, *Moha* or Delusion, *Mada* or Pride, and *Matsarya* or Jealousy are evils mostly from the standpoint of the sadhaka aiming at crossing samsara and reaching a perpetual state of perfect bliss. But to ordinary men who have very little hope or chance of attaining the high goal, namely, perfect *Scanti* and *Mukti*, complete freedom from all these six enemies is an impracticable ideal. And perhaps for the continuance of society and the species, absolute freedom from the first two or even the first three is not desirable. *Kama* and *Lobha* are desires for external objects which are generally needed by an individual in the circumstances in which he is placed and, therefore, it is wrong to totally suppress attachment to external objects so long as a person wants to retain a body and live in the world. Attachment is called *Kama* when it is directed to the satisfaction of the sex urge, but the satisfaction of that urge is ordained by God as part of the work of created beings to continue the species, Hence Lord Krishna says in the Gita that the attachment to the opposite sex for purposes of sex gratification, if limited to those lines which Dharma draws, is divine; and God himself is that love, sex-love.

Dharma aviruddho bhuteshu kaamosmi bharatarshabha.

This means, 'O Bull amongst the Bharata clan, I am the sex urge when it does not conflict with Dharma'. The royal Raghu line is praised thus "*Prajayai Griha medhinam*" i.e, having sex relations to continue the lineage. Readers will note

⁴ Vedas and puranas? There is one word *Kamavasayita*, i. e. achieving all objects, in Yoga sutras and Bhagavata and one hint or instance of it in Bhagavata Purana (re Vamana Avatar). When the Asura Bali went on defeating the Devas and conquering all the three worlds, Indra complained and sought the aid of his guru Brihaspati who then said, *Jaanami Maghavan Scatror unnaler asya kaaranam Scishyaya Upabrutam tejo Bhrugubhih Brahma vaadibhih* i.e. I know the cause of this increased prosperity of this enemy (Bali). His Guru Sukra Acharya, master of Mantra sastras has given him the benefit of his mastery of mantras.

that a total exclusion of sex contact or sex urge for all is not proper and will do no good. On the other hand, an attempt to achieve what is in the circumstances impossible or impracticable will result in numerous evils.

Similarly about *Krodha*. *Krodha* is the manifestation of the excessive vigour of the ego when it tries to assert itself against obstacles to the gaining of desired objects, services, etc. As objects are desired and have to be acquired in worldly life, *Krodha* or a resolve to overcome obstacles must be there for the temporal welfare of beings. See Gospel i.e. B.C.S. 313.

313. Baba said:—'*Yama Niyama* : Restrain lust— wholly in respect of others' wives, and partly in respect of your own. Enjoyment of marital pleasure is permissible. But be not enslaved by it. Mukti is impossible to persons addicted to lust. Lust ruins mental balance and strength or firmness. It affects the learned also. Unruly buffaloes are controlled by tying a log to their neck as a clog to their movements. *Viveka* (i.e. prudence or discrimination) must be tied to one's mind when sex attracts. Desires must be controlled. You must master them and not be their slave (*Vijitatma, Jitendriyah*).

'Yet you can (and must) use them, the inner enemies, within limits :—e.g. Besides *Kama* for the wife, have *Krodha* (anger) against unrighteousness, *Lobha* (greed) for Harinama, uttering God's name, *Moha* (fondness) for Mukti (salvation), and *Matsarya* (hatred) for evil action. Have no *Mada* (pride)'.

So long however as the sex urge and the anger urge are pulling at a person, there is no Scanti or perfect poise, no buddhi or perfect satvic understanding of things as they are, including the Self, and they are therefore obstacles to his spiritual advance.

No self-realisation is possible when sex urge. Self-urge, and other urges are ruining the equilibrium of the Self. As for *Lobha* etc., they are obviously violations of social rules and common wisdom. It is good to desire well-being but bad to be greedy. Hence *Lobha* (greed) is bad. To desire under wrong ideas is *Moha* (Delusion). This is bad. *Mada* is pride, conceit, vanity, or other kindred states and obviously implies very wrong and improper valuation of oneself and consequent

wrong behaviour towards others. *Matsarya* (jealousy) is the worst of these six mental upsets, and the reasons are those which are set out in BCS 225.

LUST

With these prefatory remarks, we shall begin with lust, and see how Baba inculcated truths about lust, and made Nana Chandorkar absorb them. Nana was a very respectable, married gentleman, having children and having family traditions and a position to maintain. Further, his training had given him excellent qualities of self-restraint and propriety of behaviour. So, he was not ordinarily what one would call a lustful, lewd, or lecherous person. He was on the other hand a very properly behaved, and excellent head of a family. Yet, the saying goes 'Even an elephant may slip'. Baba, who was watching Nana wherever he was, and at every moment, noticed that he needed to be taught and trained in the matter of lust also. On one occasion when Nana was sitting next to Baba at the Dwarakamayee, two Muslim ladies were standing for a time at a distance, evidently waiting to see when this Hindu (Nana) would go away. They had to remove their veils at the time of taking darsan, which meant, putting their bare foreheads on Baba's feet; and being gosha ladies, they did not wish a Hindu to see their faces. When Nana tried to get up on this account and go away, Baba pulled him down and said, 'Let these people come if they care'. So, the ladies had to approach Baba and take darsan with Nana by his side. Nothing happened when the elderly lady removed her veil and took her darsan. But when the younger did the same, her face struck Nana as remarkably beautiful. The sheen of the eyes, the brilliance of the countenance, the perfect proportion of the features, and the indescribable charm of the whole person, were such that Nana was at once smitten with her beauty. When his mind was thus occupied, the lady finished her darsan and resumed her veil. Then the thought struck Nana, 'Shall I have another opportunity of seeing this angelic face?'¹ Baba at once slapped him on the thigh. Then the ladies departed. Baba asked him, 'Do you know why I slapped you?' Nana admitted that his thoughts were low and unfit for one in Baba's company. He asked, 'How is it that even when I am next to you, such low thoughts sway my mind?' (B.C.&S: 205). Baba replied, 'You are a man after all,

and the body being full of desires, these spring up as sense objects approach.' Then Baba asked, 'Are there not lovely temples with well coloured exterior? When we go there, do we admire the exterior beauty or the God within? When you are seeing God within, do you ever care for the outside beauty of the building? Similarly, remember God is not only in temples. He is found in *every creature*.⁵

"Therefore when you see a beautiful face, remember that it is a temple and the image of the God within is the Jiva, a preeminent part of the Universal Soul. So, think at once of God—or the Universal Soul in every object, whether beautiful or ugly. These forms reveal the God within. There is nothing wrong in admiring beauty, but the thought must follow at once, "If this object is so beautiful, how much more beautiful and powerful must be the God who made this object and inhabits it? Thinking thus, you will not get smitten by a beautiful face hereafter". This was the upadesa given to Nana. Baba had not to go further and stop him from any sinful acts due to lust, as he had to do in another's case. (See B. C. & S. 206)

H. V. Sathe, when once staying at Shirdi, was in danger of being dragged by lust into the mire of sin. Baba, when he saw him, asked him whether he had been to the "Sala." Sala means school, but it was the local name of the house in which a young lady with considerable beauty (and bad reputation) lived.-Later in the day, H. V. Sathe went to that lady's lodgings (Sala). He carried on conversation with her behind closed doors, and there was imminent danger of a terrible and ruinous fall. Just at the nick of the moment, the door was flung open. Baba stood on the threshold and made signs to Sathe signifying, 'What! You have come all

⁵ *Dehol Devalayah proktah Scivo Jivah Sanatanah, Tyajet Ajnana Nirmalyam Soham Bhavena Pujayet.*

So says the Upanishad. which means 'The body is said to be a temple. The god (in it) is the eternal individual soul Jiva. (So) Remove the Nescience-Ajnana which is Nirmalya (used up flowers). "Soham" "I am He". Remaining with the realisation must be the worship".

2. See also S B XI (II) 45,46.

this distance to your Guru, and are you now descending to hell? Oh! What an excellent course!' Sathe was shocked and quietly went away and never again visited her house. In the case of Nana, there was no chance of his going to such extremes. On the other hand, he was naturally self-controlled, and with Baba's guidance, he developed so much of reverence for the female form that even when alone in a sequestered chamber, within closed doors with a young, beautiful person, he still would retain reverence for the lady and not have thoughts of sex. This was demonstrated in the case of Bannu Mai.

Bannu Mai (a young Muslim girl of 20) lived in a village, Bodegaon, 50 miles away from Ahmednagar, and she had the local reputation of being a mad girl. She was possessed of great beauty. She behaved most erratically and wandered anywhere and everywhere without dress amidst bushes and thorns and did not show the least sign of observing the rules of propriety demanded of women. Her mother thought she was hopelessly mad. So also thought most of the villagers. But a few had noted that her conduct showed that she was highly inspired and that she was a saint. Nana wanted to take darsan of her and asked Baba for permission. Baba, though he first objected, finally granted the permission saying, 'Go, you will have darsan'. That darsan was no easy joke. Nana went with plenty of preparations, taking a tent, bathing materials, ornaments, food, Sari (dress) etc., and setting these up, was waiting for her. He could not find out where she was, and nobody could tell him anything about her. Some people even got angry at Nana, a young officer questioning about the whereabouts of a lady who mostly went naked. Then finally, worried in his mind, Nana thought of Baba and prayed to him. When he opened his eyes, Bannu Mai was right in front of him on the road. He made his prostration (namaskar) with a feeling of reverence and without the least touch of the sexual urge. He began to take out the thorns that were found on her feet, but in a second, the saint, who did not care for such good offices, got up and went away. Again Nana was in great difficulties. He wanted that she should come, have a bath, wear the cloth and the ornaments he had brought for her, and should taste the naivedya which he had placed inside the tent. He waited and waited, and at last prayed to Baba. Suddenly Bannu Mayi

appeared, entered the tent, had her bath, put on new clothes, the ornaments and the *tali* or token of *Saumangalya* (as Goddess Parvati must wear a tali) specially prepared for her, and ate some of the naivedya. Nana fell at her feet, treating her as Mother Goddess, and at once she disappeared. Nana spent the night in a temple within closed doors, and early morning, before starting to go away, he just thought that it would be a special blessing if Bannu Mai should give him one more darsan before he departed. In a second, Bannu Mai was somehow there within closed doors right in front of him. Nana fell at her feet. Obviously Bannu Mai was a highly advanced Siddha and perfectly pure, and Nana with perfect purity, thought only of falling at her feet, and had not the least touch of sex urge at the presence of a young and beautiful lady in solitude within closed doors. Thus, Bannu Mai's case is a fairly good proof that Nana had conquered his sex urge at least to the extent possible.

KRODHA

Krodha means anger. It would include hatred, disgust, and kindred feelings. In the usual sense, anger is that which tends to vent one's full force against the adverse creature or person. Therefore, it is extremely unsocial. All the same it is a necessity. Creatures are together in this world, and there is the struggle for the survival of the fittest, and creatures have to obtain objects coveted for by more than one and, therefore, the obtaining of an object requires the venting of one's full force against adversaries or adverse forces. Hence, anger is sometimes treated as a virtue, and, in any case, a necessity of the situation in the world as it goes (especially in war). Therefore, for a virtuous person like Rama, the epithet applied is '*Jitakrodhah*', Anger-controller, that is, not that he had no anger, but that he had conquered it. For Shirdi Rama (that is Sri Sai Baba) also, we can use the same epithet) namely, '*Jitakrodhah*'. 'When the anger was on, Rama is described by Valmiki as '*Kalagni Sadruscah Krodhah*'. That is, 'When in anger, he (Rama) resembled the terrific fire that devours the world at its end'- Rama put on this anger for purposes of battle when he went to meet Ravana. He checked it when he found that Ravana had been beaten to the ground. He told him then, 'You had better go home. Come tomorrow again for battle' showing that Rama

was a *Jitakrodha*, that is he could rouse anger up at one time and stop it at the proper time and place. Baba also had need for anger, a physico-psychical need that could be understood only by persons who thoroughly studied Baba's physico-psychical organism. Anyhow, it has been noticed that Baba himself was in towering rage at times, and this appeared to be an ungovernable rage to people. They would regard Baba at those times as mad with rage. G. G. Narke once saw Baba in such a condition, and thought for the moment that Baba was a mad man. Mahlsapathy also had similar impressions. Baba corrected G. G. Narke when he came to bow to him, and said, 'Narke, I am not a mad man', knowing his momentary thought. That is, even when he was in a towering rage, he could read Narke's mind. Now reading another's mind is the result of the clairvoyant power which requires a considerable degree of placidity, *satva guna*, clear buddhi, and *scaanti*. So, Baba had all these even when he was in a towering rage. Similarly on several other occasions, of which examples are given in B.C.&S. paras 212, 213 to 218, Baba, when apparently under a wave of anger, was really placid enough to note with calmness who had come, what for, and how they required to be accommodated immediately e.g. Uddhavesa Bua, Police Sub-Inspector Samant, and Pleader Joshi of Thana each separately; and each on a separate occasion noted that Baba suddenly stopped his rage, carried out their wishes, gave them calm and cool replies and udhi. This is "*Jitakrodhah*." Rouse up your anger, use it for a time, and when you do not want it, put it back into its scabbard; this is the proper use of anger. But people do not always understand it, and may plead Baba's anger as an excuse for their own. If they really wish to have anger like Baba, they must be able to shut it up at will; but that ability they have not.

Baba however put down anger as the staunch enemy of all equanimity so absolutely essential for one's upward march in realising the final state of life called *saanti* (*Om santih, santih, santih*). So he told a Ramdasi, who was overpowered by anger when he learnt that his Vishnu Sahasranama had been taken away without his permission or knowledge and given away to Shama.

When Jog got angry with Baba who asked him for dakshina, Baba told him not to give way to anger. Some devotees are generally short tempered, and to such devotees Baba gave the special advice that they should not yield to that weakness. R. B. Purandhare and Mrs. Pradhan were two such persons. Baba said to Purandhare (B.C. & S. para 210), 'If any body comes and abuses you or punishes you, do not quarrel with him. If you cannot endure it, speak a simple word or two or else leave the place. But do not battle with him and give tit for tat. I feel sick and disgusted when you quarrel with others'. He told Mrs. Pradhan, 'If any one talks ten words at us, let us answer with one word, if we reply at all. Do not battle with any one'. On another occasion, Baba said (B.C. & S. 208), 'If any one is angry with another, he wounds me to the quick. If any one abuses another, I feel pain. If any one bravely endures the abuse, I feel highly pleased.'

Baba's self-control and carrying out this same advice has been noticed at times. A half-crazy sadhu called Nana Wali, on one occasion came to Baba and, standing before him, said, 'Baba, get up, I want to sit in your seat'. Any other person would have kicked Nanawali out, but Baba quietly vacated his seat and the impertinent Nana Wali occupied it. After sitting on it a few moments, the crazy man thought he had done too much. So, he got up, requested Baba to resume his seat, and fell at his feet, and Baba was calm throughout. This shows to what extent Baba could control his anger. In paragraph 215, Baba has said, 'I get angry with none. Will a mother harm her little ones? I love devotion. I am the bonds slave of my devotees'. He also told Nana on one occasion, 'I am not angry with you'. Baba told Mrs. Pradhan, 'You see I did not get angry with any one today.' On one occasion, when he was uttering words in a towering rage, he uttered in the middle, 'Let blessings be to all', [BCS 218] c.f. "*sarve janah sukhino bhavantu*". This blessing cannot coexist with anger. It is characteristic of a peaceful and loving frame of mind. Baba, therefore, might be considered during his towering rage to be driving away spells of thought or other ethereal waves which might be coming to harm his devotees or the public and the anger might be necessary to quench and beat back those waves. Two such instances of useful anger may be pointed out here.

When B.V.Dev wanted Baba to overcome some wretched force of destiny which prevented him from completing his study or pothi or parayan of Jnaneswari whenever he started it, Baba first repeatedly took large dakshinas from him. Finally he fell foul of him, got suddenly angry, and used these words, 'Why are you stealing my rag? Is it your way to steal and that despite your grey hairs? I will kill you with a hatchet'. This might be a special shock treatment needed for Dev's mental state. Dev wondered what this thunder of anger meant. Then Baba cooled down and said, 'Does not matter. Give me Rs. 12 dakshina', Dev gave the dakshina. Then Baba said, 'Go on reading pothi'. Dev then started reading pothi, namely, Jnaneswari. Till that time, his pothi reading was ending in failure. After Baba's anger directed evidently against adverse forces, there was no more obstacle, A very similar incident took place when Gadgi Bua (who was building a big dharmasala at Nasik for which funds first came in lakhs and later no money was forthcoming), approached Baba in order to overcome the unseen unlucky (*duradrishta*) forces. As soon as he came near, Baba used angry and bad words and curses and abused him. The Bua laughed out, Baba also laughed out. Gadgi Bua went away. Baba had driven away the adverse forces, and Gadgi Bua again got plenty of funds, and the dharmasala was completed. Thus Baba's anger is not to be understood literally. It is evidently directed against unseen forces. Similarly when Baba came as a young fakir and stayed in some lonely place, he used to shout with anger, laugh, or do other things. He was evidently always dealing from the beginning with unseen forces and directing his anger, laughter, etc. at them. G.S. Khaparde notes several times in his diary that Baba used "hard words" meaning foul and angry abuse, the cause of which the persons present could not understand.

Before leaving the subject of anger, we may also refer to other instances of Baba's outbursts of anger which had special purpose, and which were not mystic processes like the above. Sometimes they were cases of "*double entendre*." One instance may be immediately given. Shama, that is Madhav Rao Deshpande, was bitten by a snake, and his life was in danger. People are accustomed to take such patients immediately to a particular temple. In Shama's

case, however, Baba was all the God he knew, and he wanted to go to the Masjid straight away and he accordingly went there. Baba, instead of treating him civilly, flew into a furious rage, and said, 'Do not climb up Bamnia. If you do, take care. Get down. Get down, *Hat Mage Hat Mage, Bamnia. Var Mar Jav, Hat Mage, Hal Mage*'. Shama thought that his refuge was gone, that Baba was not protecting, but driving him away. Just one minute later, Baba coolly and quietly said, 'Shama, come up' and gave him directions to be observed by cobra-bitten patients, and asked him to go home, and there observe the usual directions of keeping awake and moving about and not going to sleep for 24 hours. Shama was thus saved, and he survived the cobra venom. Then what did the words mean? '*Hat Mage, Ha! Mage*' did not mean that Shama was to go down but only the poison should go down from his system. "*Bamnia Var Mat Jav*" should not be construed as addressed to the Bamnia Brahmin, namely Shama, and as asking him not to come up. But they were addressed to the poison. The poison was not to go up, but it should go down the Brahmin Shama.

Another instance of a similar sort was where Baba's outburst of anger was merely a device to enable a diarrhoea patient to get groundnuts. Kaka Mahajani had diarrhoea, and he carried a (*chombu*) vessel of water with him, and was in front of the Dwarakamayee. Baba was inside, and there were plenty of persons outside. Suddenly Baba burst out into violent rage and people fled in all directions. See B. C. & S. 392. People took to their heels and cleared the premises, Kaka Mahajani also was slowly moving towards his "chombu" and wanted to go out. Baba suddenly came and stopped him and sat next to him. There was a packet of groundnuts left by some one who was eating them, and who in his hurry to escape safe, left the groundnuts behind. Baba took up the groundnuts and shared it with Kaka Mahajani saying, 'Let us eat groundnuts'. They both ate the groundnuts, and Baba asked Kaka Mahajani to drink water on top of it. This is not exactly the treatment for diarrhoea which any doctor would dare to give, for that would aggravate it. But Baba said 'Your anal sphincter is now tightly closed'. This cured Kaka Mahajani of his diarrhoea.

LOBHA

Now we shall take up the remaining "shadripus" and see how Baba coached his dear devotee Nana in respect of these matters also.'So far as Lobha is concerned, it is excessive greed and is looked down upon even in an ordinary person, and much more in a person who aims at spiritual uplift. But so far as Nana was concerned, Lobha does not appear to have been a defect in his character. In any case, Lobha is only an exaggeration of one's attachment to moneys and goods. Baba took very good care to see that Nana's attachment did not reach excessive heights. Baba adopted his usual methods for this purpose. It is 'Dana' that is the exact opposite of, and, therefore, the antitode for, the venom called attachment or greed. This truth comes from even the date of the Brihadaranyaka (V.2). Prajapati was approached by his three sets of children, the Devas, the Naras, and the Asuras. Each of these came and said, 'Please give us instruction as to what we should do'. Prajapati answered. '*Da, Da, Da,*' to each of these. In the case of the gods, the '*Da*' required for them was *Dama*, that is, self-control, moderation. In the case of the Asuras, the '*Da*' required was *Daya*, i.e.. Mercy. Their excessive cruel nature had to be met by the spirit of compassion, which was the antidote for their cruelty. In the case of men, the '*Da*' was '*Daana*' i.e., charity. Man's natural instinct is to grasp, to be greedy, and to get more and more, and the best way of checking this greed is by making man give up all that he has got. *Daana* forces a man to part with his money, etc. and by constant parting, he will get accustomed to feel quite nonchalant, quite unaffected while parting with moneys or when moneys are lost. Thus '*Da*' (*Daana*) is the recipe given to men as the rule of their life by Prajapati.

The importance of eradicating greed from one's nature may be seen from the simplest and one of the best of all the 108 Upanishads—viz., *Isavasya Upantshad*, so much praised by Mahatma Gandhi. In the very first verse of this Upanishad, the order is given, '*Ma Gridhah Kasyasvid Danam*'. That is, 'Covet not wealth whosesoever it may be.' Or it may be translated thus, 'Covet not; Whose is wealth?' This means, What is your wealth today is mine tomorrow and somebody else's on the third day. So there is nothing fixed about wealth, and one

need not concern oneself so much about this fleeting possession. Therefore, *Daana* has been specially insisted upon not only in the Vedas and Upanishads (*dakshina* is prescribed for all the rituals) but also by Baba in his daily practice. Baba the Soul of Vairagya never cared to ask for moneys in the beginning. But when visitors began to rush upon him in crowds, in hundreds, he began to ask for *dakshina*, which had various meanings and explanations. One way of keeping out undesirable people, the over-greedy people who think of nothing except money is to ask for *dakshina*. A lawyer, who went to see Baba when alive, noted that he, a lawyer, accustomed to get money from others, was being asked to pay money to Baba. So he felt repelled and never again visited Baba during his life time. That is evidently one of the ideas underlying Baba's demand in some cases. In many other cases also, the demand of *dakshina* serves the purpose of reducing attachment. In the case of Nana, Baba used to demand off and on various sums, and so Nana was accustomed to take with him large sums like Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 whenever he visited Shirdi. Whenever Baba asked for money, Nana would give him money. This constant giving of money to Baba would naturally reduce his attachment to wealth. Baba, however, used this demand on one occasion for another purpose, which deals with the next subject.

"MOHA" i. e. DELUSION

Nana was under the delusion that he was the great supplier of Baba, and that Baba had to depend upon him for moneys. Nana had to be disabused of that idea. So, Baba made use of Sri M. B. Rege on one occasion, and exhausted all the funds he had by taking them out as *dakshina*, and when M. B. Rege said that he had no more money, Baba said, 'Borrow'. 'From whom' asked Mr. Rege. Baba sent him first to Shama who had no money at all, and who was a very poor man. Shama's explanation of Baba's demand was that Baba wanted *him* and not his cash, and, therefore, he (Baba) wanted him to feel the want of cash was nothing. So saying, he sent his namaskars through Rege to Baba. Then Baba sent Mr. Rege to H. S. Dixit who also had not the money with him at that time. He explained Baba's demand to Mr. Rege thus: 'You must not feel begging at all to be a shame, much less begging for the sake of your master'. Then Baba sent him

to Nana Chandorkar. Nana Chandorkar then explained to M.B. Rege his policy. He used to leave one half of his money at Kopergaon and come with the balance to Shirdi, and when this was exhausted, he would send for the reserve at Kopergaon. When Mr. Rege reported this, Baba sent for Nana Chandorkar and took from him (by repeatedly asking for dakshina) all the money he had in his possession. Then he again asked him for dakshina, before the reserve from Kopergaon arrived. Nana felt humiliated. His *moha* received a blow. The subjects of *moha* and dakshina are closely connected with daana.

Daana - Alms Giving

Charity or alms-giving is stressed in every religion as also in the Hindu scriptures as stated already. Yet as very few understand and practise it correctly, Baba had to give Nana instructions on Daana to reduce *lobha*, *moha* and *mada* especially through increasing contact with God. Baba's instructions to Nana are found in the Gospel 306-309. The first advice was that alms giving, should be straightforward. No one when asked for alms should utter falsehood and say 'I have not got it' (the money or other things prayed for), when he has got it, but only decline to give it in polite terms and say that circumstances do not allow the giving. No crooked ways should be adopted. Yet after this advice was given, some time later, Nana, who had promised to pay Rs. 300 for charity to be done at the Kopergaon Datta temple, did not bring the money and therefore avoided a visit to the temple, which was on his way to Shirdi. He, with the approval of his friend, took a detour through a very thorny path, as a result of which he and his friend ran thorns in their bodies. When they reached Shirdi, Baba would not talk to them.

C:— Why don't you talk to me?

B:—Nana, when a man says he will remember the lessons I taught him but really does not, how can I talk to him?

C:—Baba I remember all your lessons.

B:—You gentleman, you evade seeing 'Sircar' (God Datta) and take a detour. Why? Because the sadhu will ask you for Rs. 300. Is this the way to remember my lesson? If you have not the money, if it was not easy to arrange to get it. you

have only to tell him the fact. Will that saint eat you? But what device is this to avoid the temple of God for fear of the saint demanding money? Well then, have not thorns pierced your feet and body and the posterior part of your sapient friend? How can I talk to such a person?

Again Baba advised Nana to give his alms without any arrogance or anger and that if any beggar was not pleased and wanted more, then the beggar should be answered suavely. Wrath and official authority should not be flung at him. Nana thought this quite easy. But on one occasion when his wife was being pestered at Kalyan by a Brahmin beggar woman, who was not content with one-eighth of a measure, one-fourth of a measure, one-half of a measure, or one measure, or even 2 measures, of *Bhajani (Poriarisi porikollit)* i.e. fried and seasoned rice, and who threatened not to leave the house (at all) till the whole stock of four measures in the possession of the lady was handed over to her, Nana's wife lost patience and sent for her husband. Nana came and gave it hot to the beggar woman. 'Either you take what is given or the peon will neck you out', he stiffly remarked. Then the beggar woman left. When later Nana went to Baba, Baba again refused to talk to him. "*Mitra Dandam Abhashanam*" is the wellknown saying. That means, The way to punish a friend is by refusing to talk to him.' When Nana asked for an explanation, Baba said, 'You forgot the lesson I gave. When that beggar woman was importuning you for more and more *bhajani*, why did you show your anger and official authority, and threaten to neck her out? What mattered it if you suavely refused to give more? The woman would have remained for some time longer and left of her own accord'. Nana recognised that this mysteriously overwatching guardian angel of his was watching him every moment and anticipating the temptations and evils that would befall him, and that he should be more careful in carrying out his (Baba's) instructions, Thus, *Lobha* by leading to arrogance, insolence etc. in Nana was put down by Baba, and Nana recognised more and more what true *daana* was. True *daana* is thus described in Bhagavad Gita.

Daatavyam ity vat daanam. diyale anupakarine.

Dese kalecha patrecha tad daanam saatvikam smritam,

The beggar is not to be treated as a nuisance or as a contemptible individual. According to Hindu religion, the beggar is God himself. You have to treat him as Narayana, coming to you to give you an opportunity to serve him. So. the gift to the beggar must be with due respect and not with contempt or insolence. The above stanza means: 'The gift must be at the proper place, at the proper time, and to the proper person. It must be given with the idea. It is my duty to give this. I claim no particular merit in giving it', The gift must not be for a consideration or with a view to reward or recompense. This is satvic *daana*".

One more instance of Baba's reducing "*moha*" of 'mineness' is this: We might mention also what Baba taught Nana as to Karma to weaken *moha* on the same occasion. The *moha* that sways practically everyone of us is the attachment we feel to our children and to other members of our family and the feeling that we cannot be happy unless they are always with us. Birth and death are serious things which condition our happiness. (See B. C. and S. 371). We have already referred to Baba's help in the case of Minatai's difficult labour. Unfortunately within a few months after its birth, her child died. A short time before delivery, the husband of Minatai also had died. Minatai was very young. The whole family was in gloom. They went to Shirdi and sat in sullen silence before Baba. Baba asked, 'Why are you so sullen?'. Then Nana said, 'Baba, you know everything. While we are under your care, these calamities have befallen us. We are bereft of child and son-in-law'. Baba answered, "If you care for child and son-in-law and come to me for that, you are mistaken. You should not come to me for these. These are not in my power. The birth of a child and the death of relatives are dependent on poorva karma. Even Parameswar, the Great God, who has created this world, cannot alter this. Do you think he can tell the Sun or the Moon, 'Rise some two yards farther away from your usual or appointed place?' No, He cannot and will not do that. That would produce disorder and chaos". Nana asked 'if that is so, Baba, how is it that you tell someone, "You will have a son" and he gets a son, and you tell another "You will get employment" and he gets it? Are these not *chamatkars* of yours?' Baba answered, 'No, Nana. I do not do any *chamatkars*. You have your village astrologers. They work at three or four days ahead and

give out their predictions, some of which come true. I look just further ahead. What I say happens. My art also is a sort of astrology.

But you do not understand this. To you, my words look like *chamatkars*, because you do not know the future. So, you regard events as proofs of my miracle working power, and you turn your reverence on to me. I in my turn turn your reverence on to God and see that you are really benefited'. Baba thus weakened his *moha* or unconditional and excessive attachment to relations. Baba's further advice in this matter is given elsewhere.

MADA

Thus far we have dealt with *Lobha* and *Moha*. We shall next proceed to see how Baba dealt with the other two items, namely, *Mada* and *Maatsarya*. *Mada* is pride, conceit, vanity, or display of one's ill-conceived high opinion of oneself in a way displeasing and disgusting to others. That pride may be based upon either caste or wealth or learning or physical strength, etc. In the case of Nana, pride of learning and caste was in him, and it had to be duly toned down. That which is the hardest to conquer is pride of learning. This over-attachment to learning is called '*Vidya Vasana*'. When we have to shake off *vasana* (tendency) after *vasana* to get into pure Satva of Brahman, one serious obstacle is this Vidya vasana, the idea 'I am a learned man', 'I know all the Vedas', 'I must consider everything in my own style and cannot accept somebody else's dictum.' These are all vidya vasana traces, and all of them are fatal to one's chance of attaining Mukti. So, Baba had to put down this pride of learning in Nana. Nana was not very offensively parading his learning, but still had an idea that his knowledge of Sanskrit and the Gita with Sankara Bhashya placed him high above the ordinary run of men in knowledge. Baba wanted at one stroke to pull him by the heels and show him how dangerous his conceit was and at the same time teach him the duties of a (sishya) pupil and lay the foundation for Brahma-realisation (which cannot coexist with Ego and Egotism). One day when Nana was massaging Baba's feet, he was mumbling something to himself. Baba asked him what it was. Nana said that it was a Sanskrit verse.

Baba : What verse?

Nana : A Gita verse.

Baba : Recite it audibly.

Then Nana gave out Bhagavad Gita, Chapter IV, verse 34, dealing with Sishya and Guru relation. Baba knew exactly what he was mumbling and caught him exactly at the point wanted. It dealt with the Guru's teaching the sishyas, and that is what Baba wanted—to disabuse him of his conceit and pride based on an ego which barred God-realisation or *jiva brahma-aikya*. The stanza runs as follows :

Tadviddhi pranipaatenaa paripraschnena sevaya,

Upadekshyanti lejnaanatan jnaamnah tatvadarsinah,

Baba asked Nana whether he knew the meaning and, if so, to give it. When Nana gave the general purport, Baba ordered him to give a word for word translation with strict reference to number, gender, case, tense, mood, and other parts of grammar. Nana wondered how the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar could be understood by Baba who showed no trace of linguistic, literary or any other education. Anyhow he went on giving the word for word meaning. Then Baba began a cross-examination of the severest sort.

Baba : Well, what does 'Ta?' refer to?

Nana: Jnana.

Baba: Which Jnana?

Nana : Jnana referred to in the previous verse.

Baba : What does *pranipata* mean?

Nana : It means prostration or bowing down.

Baba : What does 'Pata' mean?

Nana: The same.

Then Baba asked :—If '*Pranipata*' and '*Pata*' meant the same thing, would the author (Vyasa) have used two extra needless syllables? Similarly about '*Pariprasna*', Nana said, '*Pariprasna*' means questioning, and '*Prasna*' also meant the same. When asked whether the author was again needlessly adding two syllables, Nana could not explain the difference. Similarly about *Seva*. Nana said that it was merely service like massaging, which he was doing.

Baba : Nothing else?

Nana : Nothing else so far as I can see.

In that way Baba puzzled him word after word and phrase after phrase and puzzled him also with the general question, why Krishna, a Jnani, should refer Arjuna to other Jnanis instead of himself giving him Jnana. Again he asked, 'Is not Arjuna a soul of the nature of Chaitanya, i.e., knowledge?' Then, when this was answered in the affirmative, he asked 'How can (or why should) knowledge be given to that which is already knowledge?'. Chandorkar was simply dumbstruck. After putting several other questions like this, Baba finally asked, 'By a difference in syllabification, can you read one extra syllable (without damaging the metre or verse)?' 'Yes' answered Nana 'We can say *Upadekshyanti Te {a} jnanam*. Then Nana added, 'What! this reading of the Guru giving *Ajnanam* is not in Sankara Bhashya.' Baba said. "That does not matter, if that makes a better meaning'. Nana could not understand how the Guru's giving *Ajnanam* could make a better meaning. Then Nana Chandorkar was thoroughly humbled. He felt that he was before a giant who knew Sanskrit, who knew the Upanishads, and who knew everything. He then asked Baba himself to explain, and Baba's answers to his own questions revealed a wealth of knowledge of Upanishadic material and a cleverness in twisting the words into a new meaning. So far as the word 'Jnanam' is concerned, Baba quoted Upanishads and said 'Is not Jnana that which is beyond Mind and Speech (quoting *Yatovacho Nivartante*) ? Is not Jnana, *Avang Manasa Gocharam*, i.e. beyond Vak and Manas?' Nana had to say 'yes'. Then Baba said, 'Therefore, what the Guru says through his mouth is not *Jnana*, and what is not *Jnana* is *Ajnana*! So thoroughly humiliated, Nana wondered what it all led to. Baba, however, explained, 'Just as one thorn removes another, the Guru's teaching which is verbal begins as *Ajnana* and removes the *Ajnana* of the sishya which is but a cover over the sishya's knowledge, and the result is *Jnana*. Therefore what the Guru teaches is primarily *Ajnana* which tends to result in *Jnana*. *Jnana* is not created, but is always there, and is not uttered. The uttered word, like an optician's instrument, simply removes the cataract from the eye of the pupil who, thereafter, sees and recognizes himself in a state of pure knowledge'. Thus Baba went on explaining

the whole stanza and insisted upon the sishya's duties. Baba said, 'Seva is not any ordinary massage. You must surrender *Tan Man Dhan*, body, mind and possessions. You must not feel that you are rendering service to the master. Your body already surrendered is the master's property, and you must feel "No merit is in me. I am merely making the body, which is yours, serve you". That is "Seva." *Pariprasna* and *pranipata* were similarly explained to show how thorough must be the spirit of surrender and the spirit of earnestness. '*Pranipata*' must be '*Sashtanga dandavat* like a stick falling down. You must feel that you are nothing. You are only a zero. The Guru is everything, and, therefore, thorough humility is involved in *pranipata*. *Pariprasna* means an earnest questioning and repeated questioning, i.e. questioning carried on up to the point of getting full and complete enlightenment impressed upon you. This is *pariprasna*. It is not merely putting questions with a view to trapping up the master, and catching him at some mistake or simply asking for the fun of it, (like Pilate who asked Jesus "What is Truth", and did not wait for an answer but went away.)

We shall narrate another instance where Nana's pride of learning received a good shock. Nana was observing the vedic injunction that at every meal he should prepare the Vaisvadeva food and, after offering it to God, wait for an *Atithi*, i.e. guest, before he should eat it. Nana was in so many camps and waiting, and yet he never found an *Atithi* or guest. So, one day he thought, "How could Vedas give such a nugatory or infructuous injunction?" With that thought uppermost in his mind, he went to Baba. Though he did not utter it, Baba himself started the subject. Baba said, 'Yes, The Devil, they will come. You think that *Atithis* will come wherever you go. But you do not look at the *Atithis* when they do come.' 'Yes, Baba. I want to know how that is', said Nana. Then Baba answered. 'The mistake is not in the Vedas. The mistake is in your interpretation of the Vedas. An '*Atithi*' is not necessarily a person who is a Brahmin by birth, and who would come to your quarters to sit at meal with you. After your puja is over, take some food out in your hand and leave it in some corner, and thousands of *Atithis* will be coming one after another, each in its own due course, and partake of it. They are the asses, the dogs, the flies, the ants, etc. To you they do not look like

*Atithis*⁶. But they are *Atithis*, for *God is in them all*'. If you do this, the Vedic injunction is satisfied and you will obtain the required *punya*". Nana felt duly humbled by seeing that Baba gave an interpretation which made the Vedas sensible, whereas his own interpretation made the Vedas absurd and infructuous. Baba also asked Nana to leave the food outside without crying out or calling for anyone or anything. This is set out in the Gospel (BCS 309). See also B Gita XV 14. Lord Krishna says '*Aham Vaisvaanaro Bhutva Praaninam deham ascritah Praana apaana-samayukto Pachamyannam chaturvidham*', i.e., 'as the *Vaisvanara* (fire) I enter the bodies of creatures, and in union with *Prana* and *Apana* digest and use up food of all the four sorts (solid, very solid, semisolid, and liquid).' Thus, Nana not only got a valuable addition to his knowledge of sastraic duty but also got more humble in finding that Baba could give an interpretation which made the Vedas sensible and not nugatory nor infructuous.

Nana was very far advanced amongst the disciples of Baba. But human nature is hard to subdue. Familiarity, if it does not breed contempt, at least breeds liberty-taking, and Nana was the only one or one of the very few who hobnobbed with Baba. All the hundreds of males and females that went to Baba at puja or Arti time would invariably stand up, and no one would sit. Upasani Maharaj had to stand and so had others to stand. The pujari Bapu Saheb Jog had to stand. Every person, male or female whatever his or her position may be, had to stand before Baba. Nana, however, used to sit next to Baba, even at Arti. Having studied Baba's nature, Nana began to get rather weak in his humility and reverence. For instance, the vessel of water held near Baba's lips at the close of the puja, would be distributed to all as *tirtha*, and they would all drink it. But Nana and Das Ganu would not take it. Therefore, familiarity had its adverse effect in

⁶ ***See Khaia** Upa v. 7 *Vuisvaiarah praviscati Atithir Bmtimano gruhan Tassyaitam scanttin Kurvanti. Hara Vaivasvata udakam*, i.e. The Brahmin guest enters into a house as the Vaisvanara Fire People (ie. the hosts) appease him. 0 **Death** bring water to offer him (as *Padya Arghya* and *Acliamaniya* sc.).

the case of Nana also. *Tirtha taking* is after all a minor matter. The more important matter is that Baba's presence, which was magnetic, lost a great deal of its magnetic spell in Nana's case by his repeated contact. The highest lessons one has to learn from a Moksha Guru are first to realise that in a particular person or object there is God, and next that He is in all. That means that one must first have realisation of one's own nature and of God's nature; and God should not be merely that which you worship with flowers. God should not be that which you feel to be only in one place and at one time. Gita says, 'A person who understands Iswara properly must feel awe and bliss from the presence of Iswara in everything,' Baba, being the Guru Deva, had to teach his beloved pupil this truth and make him realise God in all things and feel awe, love, etc. Baba is treated as God on account of his wonderful power and knowledge and is held in awe by others. But Nana seeing Baba constantly at the Mosque or in particular places naturally developed *sakhya* more than *daasya* and insisted on particularising and humanising or fraternising with Baba and not universalising him, as he ought to have done. Baba had to overcome this difficulty.

So, Baba wanted to make him feel (firstly) divinity more and more in Baba and (secondly) the fact that Baba's divinity is not confined to the Baba body but extends to all creatures as Baba is their Antaryami or soul or self. These two are closely connected. Baba said, 'I am not at Shirdi alone. I am in all creatures, in the ant, etc'. Intellectually this was understood, but at heart, Nana did not realise it. Baba wanted him to realise it more vividly, as that was very important for higher spiritual progress. So on one occasion, when Nana came up, Baba told him to prepare 8 pooran polis (cakes) for naivedya and then take his food. When Nana placed before Baba eight pooran polis, Baba did not touch them, but flies sat on them. Then Baba asked Nana to take away the prasada (i.e. remnant of food which Guru had first tasted). Nana insisted that Baba should eat some. Baba said that he had eaten. 'When?' asked Nana. Nana said, 'All the eight polis are there'. Baba said he had eaten it at some time. Then Nana got vexed and went away to the chavadi. When Baba sent for him, the same conversation was repeated. Finally Baba told Nana, 'I say you have been living with me for 18

years now. Is this all your appraisal of me? Does Baba mean to you only the 3½ cubits height of this body? Am I not in the fly and the ant that settled upon the polis?' Nana said that he knew that, but could not realise it. If Baba could make him realise it, Nana said, he would take and eat the polis as prasad. Then Baba lifted his hand and made a gesture. He thereby revealed a secret which Nana was hiding very deep in his heart; and Nana discovered that Baba knew the secret. How? The only explanation was that Baba was the *antaryami* or the inmost soul in his heart. If Baba was his *antaryami*, he must be the *antaryami* of the fly and the ant also. So he agreed to take the pooran poli as prasad, and was satisfied. Then Baba told him, 'As you see the gesture I make, you must remember that I am in all creatures'. Thus Baba gave him a very valuable lesson and took him up one very important rung of the ladder, that is, realising God in one form after another and not confining Him to the object worshipped at home or in a temple.⁷

Baba had to teach several other valuable lessons, most of which are embodied in the Gita. When Nana was cross-examined about the Gita sloka, he finally prayed that Baba should teach him the gist of the Gita. Baba told him to come up everyday, after going through part of the Gita, and to sit at his feet. Then when Nana did so, all that he had read in the Gita flashed as realisation in his heart. This is what is mentioned by the *Svetasvataropnishad*, last stanza, namely,—

yasya deve para bhaktih, yata deve talha gurow

tasyaite kathifa hyarthaah prakaascante mahaatmanah

This means, 'To him who has intense faith in God and equally intense faith in his Guru, (to that Great Soul), these truths of the Upanishads (about realisation of Brahman) will shine forth'. Nana had full faith in Baba, and, as he sat before

⁷ The very great importance of this realisation is seen from the frequent insistence on it, not merely in [the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, but also in the Rhagavata XI Sk.

Baba, the full gist of the Gita, chapter by chapter, flashed before his heart and helped him to realisation.

This method of direct illumination in the heart of the pupil without utterance of any speech by the Guru is called *Mouna Vyakhya* and the Dakshinamurthi method, which must be more fully described in a later chapter, as this one is already too long. For the same reason, other truths taught to Nana Saheb Chandorkar have to be described in chapters dealing with other devotees, who were taught the same truths.

Eknath Bhagavata XI was prescribed by Sai Baba for study (Parayana) by so many of his bhaktas including H.S. Dixit, Uddhavesa Bua, etc., It was also recommended (and made frequent use of) by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and other saints and gurus.

In closing this chapter, one naturally feels the importance of taking up the two great highlights of the Sai movement, its pioneers and, by a careful, humble, and observant comparison and contrast of the two, noting what can be derived as conclusions about their individual natures, the way in which they approached Baba and Baba approached and benefited them. Comparisons are said to be odious, but comparison and contrast is the very life breath of a proper study of human beings and the way in which they progress. If one avoids captious criticism, irresponsible remarks, superficial admiration, and prejudiced views, one may arrive at various valuable truths by comparing and contrasting bhaktas. Thereby one begins to understand much better the way in which Sai Baba was approached and He operated upon those contacting him. The study might prove interesting in any case for a student of religion and should prove particularly valuable to those bhaktas who are anxious to approach Sai Baba now to determine for themselves in what way they ought to approach him, what preparations, if any, they ought to make, and how Baba is likely to benefit them. These first views may not be exhaustive or perfectly accurate, but they may form the basis for one's earnest effort to get the best out of Sai's contact. They certainly will help any one to understand Sai better. When we note the innumerable ways in which Baba was approached by persons of various levels

and grades and how Baba responded in each case, we are struck with wonder and delight. It is like noting the rays of the Sun which shoot out in all directions and operate in innumerable different ways on different objects or matters at various levels. At the very outset, this author bows down with utter humility before these two great saintly personages, namely, Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar, whose height he can never hope to reach, and about whom he cannot have the least irreverence, jealousy, envy, cavilling tendency or any other improper attitude. Following Baba's directions to Annasaheb Dabolkar (Hemadpant), the study has been undertaken here also of great worthies who contacted Baba, partly with a view to understand and appreciate Baba's workings and partly to present Baba's lilas with as much fairness, fullness and clearness as possible. When there is this sincerity, humility, and desire for truth, Baba declared that jnana and vairagya would be the results of the study of bhaktas' experiences, that is, bhaktas' experiences contained in the biography. Therefore, this author has ventured to study among others these huge giants, who acted as pioneers in the Sai movement, to present as attractive and useful a picture as possible.

Both Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar were pioneers, but they strike one as being in the opposite poles in social, intellectual, and other matters. Mahlsapathy was a humble, poor goldsmith in an obscure village. Chandorkar, on the other hand, was a scion of a well known reputed Brahmin family, the heads of which held high positions in the State, owned considerable property, and led lives highly praised by their community and were well known to fame. Both Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar had from the beginning pious surroundings and early orthodox training. Both adhered to *sadachara* and worshipped God in accordance with family customs and adopted family traditions. But these traditions were different in the case of these two families. The humble goldsmith could only worship his tutelary deity Khandoba not known at all even to Hindus outside Maharashtra and get ideas of God to be found in Mahlsapathy purana, and progressed only on lines indicated therein and followed the footsteps of his father. In Chandorkar's case, he had the entire Sanskrit religious literature before

him and the worship of the far-famed Vedic deities of the Trinity - Siva and Vishnu alike - and he followed Sankara Acharya in matters of doctrine. To Mahlsapathy, education was practically a sealed book. To Chandorkar's eyes, literature spread a vast panorama, and he was prepared to advance as far as his powers would permit, alike in secular and religious education. Mahlsapathy could not get beyond his pial school. But Chandorkar as already noted rapidly advanced from his elementary to secondary and from secondary to high school and then to collegiate education, and, by the age of 20, obtained a degree from the University, and entered service, wherein also he rose by his ability in seven years to the position of a Deputy Collector.

Equally rapid and notable was his march in his studies. He read up not merely Western philosophy, but also Sankara's philosophy as contained in the Gita Bhashya and other sacred works. He read up books not merely in Sanskrit but also in English, and could widen his views in both spiritual and temporal matters to an extent which would be impossible for Mahlsapathy. Naturally the consequence of such progress and position would be to develop self-assurance and even egotism in Chandorkar, and he would be apt to assume, as so many educated orthodox persons assume, that Moksha is merely a matter of conquest over the self as described in Vivekachudamani and other works by bringing their teachings into practice as early as possible in one's life. In Mahlsapathy's case, there was no question of extra studies. The four corners of Mahlsapathy Purana formed the horizon of his view. He had to pick up his religious and other knowledge only from what is contained in a few elementary books and from family traditions and the contacts he had with sadhus and saints. Several people would fancy that, from this contrast, the position of Chandorkar was far superior to that of Mahlsapathy. But such people are ignoring the very important fact that both these went to Sai Baba, the All Knowing Samartha Sadguru, whose methods of imparting culture, wisdom, and excellence to his devotees were so unique, so different, nay wholly different, from those adopted in ordinary religious education from religious gurus.

In the case of Baba, it is not the study that one has of Vivekachudamani or Bhagavata that counts. On the other hand, one totally devoid of any book study, but possessed of perfect self-surrender, humility, trust, and love towards the Guru Baba, was and is the person who could derive the fullest benefits from Baba. Chandorkar's vast learning should all be unlearned before Baba could impart anything to him. The idea that one has understood all about Jiva and Paramatma and the methods by which Paramatma could be reached by a Jiva forms the greatest obstacle to one's progress. It is not the intellect, the keenness of intellect, that is wanted from a person approaching Baba. (*Naayam atma pravachanena labhyah namedhaya na bahuna scrutena*). It is humility, receptivity, and a readiness to receive all that Baba gives, that counts. Mahlsapathy, therefore, was really not at a disadvantage in the above respect. Perhaps he had more receptivity and humility than Chandorkar. For instance, Chandorkar thought that Baba could not understand Gita and could not possibly throw light on Chapter IV, verse 34, of the Bhagavad Gita being presumably ignorant of the Gita or its source, namely, the Upanishads. So long as these false ideas remained in his mind, his progress was doomed to failure. That is why Baba knocked off that conceit by a severe cross-examination on the Gita and by quotation of Upanishadic authorities which stunned Chandorkar and made him perceive that knowledge was not to be had by study of books alone but by openness of mind and approach to the source of all light. Chandorkar was by no means the exception amongst the educated people in this respect. Sri Upasani Maharaj had a similar obsession of his own learning and understanding of God and the methods by which alone he fancied he had to reach God, namely, mantras, japa, etc., which he had picked up at the feet of his grandfather. Baba had to disabuse Upasani Maharaj and others of their wrong notions before he could benefit them. As Baba pointed out to the Valambi Station Master, persons (evidently with much conceit of learning etc.) came to him like vessels the mouth of which was kept inverted and were therefore incapable of receiving any benefits from him. Before one learns what is valuable, one must unlearn what is harmful and even though we should not call Chandorkar and others conceited,

yet from the standpoint of Baba, there was enough conceit in them to prevent their deriving benefit until and unless sufficient humility and receptivity were implanted in them. Vasanas including Vidya Vasana form Ahamkar and shut out the Supreme Light, Therefore the contrast between Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar in respect of education is apt to be misleading. Even in Mahlsapathy's case a certain amount of conceit and sufficiency of Khandoba puja for one's spiritual and temporal welfare is sure to have been lodged in him by family traditions and otherwise. Even this had to be knocked off. Baba's miraculous power, wonderful knowledge, and mysterious supervision for the benefit of devotees would naturally knock off any improper assumptions or conceit on the part of devotees like Mahlsapathy and keep them at the proper level of receptivity. This remark applies also to Chandorkar.

The comparison and contrast between Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar in respect of social matters -was glaring and most marked. One was a wretchedly poor goldsmith begging his bread and starving for days after days. The other was a rich Deputy Collector with immovable properties, with a bank balance perhaps, feeding guests at his house, and looked up to as a Lord or a big man by innumerable people and not without reason. Yet the difference in this respect counts for nothing so far as fitness for receiving benefits from Sai Baba is concerned. The manner of contacting Baba by both may also be contrasted. Mahlsapathy, who first kept Baba out of his temple on account of his being a Muslim, was still able to perceive his spiritual greatness by his frequent contact and conversation with local saints like Devidas who could and did appreciate the worth of Baba. And being struck with Baba's greatness, Mahlsapathy fell at Baba's feet and determined to become his sishya. In the case of Chandorkar, he was too high a person to think of falling at the feet of a fakir, especially when his father was opposed to Muslims having anything to do with members of his family. Baba had to send for him before Chandorkar could think of going to Shirdi. Even after his first visit to Shirdi, Chandorkar could not make up his mind to be with Baba. Baba had to reveal his wonderful knowledge of what passed at Ahmednagar between him and the Collector and reveal his foreknowledge of a

new serum to be tried on Chandorkar's system, assuring him that no harm would befall him by undergoing the inoculation. This gradual perception of Baba's wondrous psychic powers, and his interest in Chandorkar inducing him to use all these powers for his benefit, conquered Chandorkar. His intellect surrendered and his love responded to Baba's call. Still as he came at a pretty late stage of his development, it was no joke for him to adapt himself to Baba's ways; and however much he might try, he could never get the fullest benefit of Baba's contact. In the case of Mahlsapathy, it was just the other way. There was a complete surrender by Mahlsapathy, who was very humble, and very poor, and had to depend entirely upon Baba for guidance, guardianship and all that he wanted. Mahlsapathy, therefore, quickly regarded Baba as being on the same level as Khandoba. Mahlsapathy could never think of philosophical or scientific explanations for Baba's lilas and would never trouble himself about them. But on the other hand some people who derived the fullest benefit by contact with Baba like Chandorkar (and the other educated set with him) were constantly trying to find out how Baba worked, what the meaning of Baba's lilas and words was, and whether Baba's siddhis fitted in with the previous religious ideas that they already had. Baba dissuaded the educated set at Shirdi from going into these disquisitions and told them that there would be no use in doing so. But nature is hard to conquer and evidently up to the last, they had their wobbling and never attained that complete surrender which Mahlsapathy got so easily.

Baba's dealings with Nana Chandorkar bring out one clear fact into prominence. Baba was not thought to be a teacher by many who contacted him and by others also who thought about him after his Mahasamadhi. It is now increasingly realised that Baba was a teacher. But even that is a misstatement. He was not a mere teacher. He was a trainer and still more, one who undertook to mould the personality of the approaching devotee. He was still more than that. He was Providence providing everything needed, temporal or spiritual, for the advancement of the persons surrendering to him; and still more than that, we find that Baba was not merely a teacher or trainer, but a school or a college in himself, nay a University in himself with postgraduate courses and research

courses leading *ad infinitum* to unknown horizons. Baba's methods are so very strange and infinite in variety. He suited and suits himself to each pupil and provides special courses peculiar to each pupil, and that is why he has been compared to a University with research courses. This is very well illustrated in Nana Chandorkar's case. Baba had achieved the highest pinnacle of spiritual greatness, and he developed incidentally powers of every sort that we read of in *Vibhuti Pada* i.e.. Part III 16-55 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (dealing with all siddhis ending with Moksha Siddhi) or Chapter XV of Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI, relating to yoga siddhis. He never seems to have practised yoga for itself, but his intense concentration on his Guru with white heat of love banishing everything else but the Guru from his mind was the highest yoga that could be thought of as described in the above mentioned Skanda XI. As stated in chapter 15, verse 32, what is there impossible for one who concentrates upon Iswara with great intensity? All the siddhis were at his control and he utilised these siddhis as and when occasion required for every purpose that came to his view. He had to draw thousands to himself by reason of rinaubandha or for other reasons. By drawing them and subsequently making them hold on to him and draw more and more benefit from him, Baba had to confer various benefits by the use of his extraordinary powers. The display of his weird knowledge and weird powers was the best means for drawing people and holding them on to him and lifting them step by step, up the ladder of spirituality. Amongst the thousands that he drew, it will be difficult to find how many classes there were. If in a University there are a hundred classes, in Baba's University there must have been more, and, as for students, if a University here can boast of a strength of a few thousands, Baba's University boasts of many thousands. The peculiar power of apparently one (Baba) playing the part of the teacher, the trainer, tutor, proctor, and feeder of so many thousands even in distant places, is something unseen and unheard of.

Baba had to draw Chandorkar first by reason of his previous rinaubandha and make him the most prominent and notable amongst his (earlier) apostles. He has done that, and this learned and high-placed apostle, working together with his orderly Constable (Das Ganu) has been responsible for building up a vast

mass of bhaktas that constituted the nucleus of the world of Sai bhaktas that we see today and the bigger world of Sai bhaktas that is yet to be. But this apostle was not necessarily the recipient of everything that Baba could give. He did not attain to anything like Baba's position. He was given a very good modicum of Baba's gifts and he made enormous strides in his temporal and spiritual position. But he did not go through all courses of Baba's University.

Bahunam janmanamante jnanavan maam prapadyate

Kalena atnani vindati

He did not reach perfect or all-round development and perhaps it is not reached usually in one life. B.C. VII. 19, IV. 38. In this same volume, we find devotees with merits and excellences perceived even by Chandorkar himself as those that he had not attained to. As we have seen from the first chapter Mahlsapathy the uneducated Bhikshuka, reached very great heights of self-sacrifice and constant service to Baba which far exceeded what Chandorkar could reach or render. The absolute Saint Francis-like self-abnegation and perpetual service of Mahlsapathy, was impossible in Nana Chandorkar's condition with his family, position, office and reputation to keep up.

Chandorkar had been deeply ingrained in traditions of orthodox Hindu piety. Therefore, as already stated, he was a great believer in one's own efforts and the absolute importance and sufficiency of Vedic learning, mastery of works like Sankara Bhashya of Gita and Viveka Chudamani, for one's spiritual success. Many a reader of this book would share his views and find it hard at first to understand the difficulty which we are mentioning now as standing in Nana's way. Ninety per cent of educated people believe that a mere following of the sastras and the traditional methods of puja, dhyana, and study with meditation would suffice for one's achievement of moksha and for a thorough grasp of both Atman and Brahman. Therefore most are for self development relying upon oneself to grow step by step. (This is termed the *Markata Sisuvarga*] believing that every step upwards is achieved by one's own activity. But in Baba's method, (which may be termed *Marjara Sisuvarga*) the exact opposite is the truth, (See Gospel 176). Baba achieved the highest Jiva-Brahma Aikya which he expressed

by the aphorism *Maim Allah hum (Aham Brahma Asmi)*. Numerous powers and benefits followed it. What was his sadhana that led to this? Was he working up text book after text book and resolving doubt after doubt by approaching masters, book in hand? Exactly the opposite. He told Radhabai Deshmukhin, 'I know one thing, the truth taught me by my Guru. It is not the various sadhanas and books that are necessary. A study of the sastras is not necessary. What is necessary is absolute surrender to, and love of, the guru', (cf also BCS. 191) This, Baba declared, he had adopted, and the result was that by the Guru's grace, he was raised to the highest pinnacle. He attained to laya in his Guru. That was bhakti. It was also jnana, what is called jnana in our text books i.e. a realisation that follows as a part of the experience of one who has merged himself by surrender and love in the Guru. So, to progress on the lines on which Baba progressed, one must completely surrender oneself.

As will be seen in a later chapter dealing with Upasani Baba, the efforts of the orthodox and the learned to master one truth after another or one mantra after another with the feeling 'I have mastered this', is the greatest obstacle to progress in Baba's line.

The 'Vidya Vasana ego' is an almost insuperable barrier standing in the way of the educated, the cultured, and the intellectual set that approached and still approach Baba. Nana was the first and foremost of these intellectuals. His Vidya vasana was very powerful. He believed that he could understand and by his understanding reach Moksha. This, being a very powerful obstacle, had to be overcome, and the first step or mark of overcoming is humility and preparedness to surrender the ego or egotism.

For instance in understanding Gita, which Nana thought was a great feat achieved by himself, he could not see that his egotism barred him from really understanding Brahman or "*Tat*" for, where Ego is, '*Tat*' or Brahman is not, Baba, in order to enable him to come nearer to "*Tat*", had to knock off his self-sufficiency, egotism, and conceit, and stretch him on the floor in the mood of 'I am nothing; let the ego go; let the Guru's grace come with its enlightenment to revive the self with as little ego as possible,' and the teaching on BG IV 34-35

was the first stroke, which though powerful was not sufficient. By reason of this handicap, Nana got a certain advance in his spirituality through his understanding assisted by a certain amount of humility. But old habits will not die. As Kirtankars says, *Prakriti* (nature) dies hard and the mouse, with its rodent nature, that was offered the chance of marrying the Sun, the Clouds, the Winds and the Mountain declined all of them and ended only by marrying a rat. This is no depreciation of the great achievements of Nana Chandorkar or of Baba's undoubted ability to train him. But Baba himself recognised that there were certain barriers and limits which could be overcome only to a certain extent at a time in the circumstances of each case. That shows the need for and advantage of studying Baba's dealing with as many Bhaktas as possible. Ultimately the full course may be achieved for each as for Nana, by Baba, but that was not to be in this birth. That is what one notes, viz, that Baba trained Nana more or less in accordance with his (Nana's) own ideas. Baba is no destructive revolutionist but usually builds on old foundations. So, as Nana's opinion was that he should proceed onwards from *vairagya* and *viveka* through *Samadhi shatka* and *mumukshutva* he was given a certain advance in each of these and had to stop there for this birth (with incomplete success as he must have done in the four previous lives in which he contacted Baba). The tendencies of the animal and the tendencies of the human self built up by one laboriously birth after birth give one a particular bent or bents and have all to be taken into consideration; and the advance that Nana made in view of all these has been described in this chapter.

Here, however, (for purpose of studying Baba's methods and enabling devotees or readers to study him with reference to their own condition) we may amplify the summary given above and note some portions which Nana did not go through in this life or practically failed to achieve and which other bhaktas of Baba not so highly placed nor so brilliantly equipped did achieve. Taking the case of Kaka Dixit (Hari Sitaram Dixit), his apparent disadvantages, compared with Nana Chandorkar, proved real advantages. As stated already, for the best results according to Baba's system for one who approached Baba in accordance with Baba's traditions, the first requisite was humility and receptivity and not

much learning. In Baba's system, it is the Guru that pours into the sishya virtue after virtue by training him step after step to secure the virtues and the knowledge that he (the Guru) wishes to equip the pupil with, just as the cat carries its kittens to safe and good places. In the case of Nana, his very high learning and great ability in official and other matters were naturally accompanied by a high degree to self-assertion and egotism, which make for success in literary study, official matters, and to a certain extent even in spiritual matters. But for the highest results, it is just the opposite, namely, want of egotism, utter reduction of egotism, the power to relax the Ego and keep it relaxed for long periods, that is essential. That is why the drinking of the water washing the feet of the Guru and taking his *Uchchishta tirtha* are insisted upon in the Guru Gita for a pupil's advance, for they create and develop thorough annihilation of Ahamkara or Ego through towering reverence to the Guru ending in Love. In the case of Kaka Dixit, these disabilities of Nana Chandorkar were not present. Though high up in public life even as M.L.C. and highly successful at the Bombay Bar, he had developed humility and an equal vision by his varied experiences in India and England. A travel by sea and a visit to Britain have the remarkable effect of subduing pride and prejudice. We find in Britain the biggest men hobnobbing with common men in trains and other places and that sense of equality is very high and there people seem to feel the truth of what Burns sang—

"Man's a man for a'that".

"The rank is but the guinea stamp.

The man's the good for a'that".

On board the steamer, the Muhammadan boys who give you tea and bread, Brahmin leader though you are, feel that they are your equals, and all caste pride and peculiarities of orthodox life including the revulsion from Moslem touch disappear even in the early days of your steamer life. Kaka Dixit therefore could view Hindus, Muslims, and Christians with equal vision (which Nana could not command) and could feel himself thoroughly humble and ready to receive any Upadesa coming from Baba as something high over his head, whereas Nana, with all his mastery of Gita and other scripture, could not so completely

forget that he was a Brahmin Hindu already having a high stand. Moreover the accident to Dixit's leg, leading to a loss of its free use and inducing an inferiority complex or sense of irreparable loss and disgust with life was just the upward push that was needed.

In this samatva with humility, *prapatti* towards Baba is easier; and in all this, Chandorkar must be considered inferior to H. S. Dixit. Dixit could forget the difference between Hindu and Muslim and feel no repulsion to Moslem contact. When Baba's *teertham* was offered, Dixit and others would gladly take it, but not Chandorkar nor Das Ganu. When Bade Baba, a Muslim fakir, wanted a residence at Shirdi, to be near Baba or his tomb, no villager there would tolerate a Muslim within his small house. Dixit alone had the courage to offer a portion of his wada to Bade Baba. But many fell foul of Dixit for that provision, and even Nana Chandorkar was in the opposition and represented to Dixit the impropriety of housing a Muhammadan in "Dixit wada" (used as a travellers' bungalow for devotees at Shirdi) as that would repel so many Hindu devotees who would otherwise go there and use it. These are given only as a sample to show that Nana had not the fullest benefit of Baba contact. One's previous course of life hampers one considerably in making advance even under the powerful influence of Baba. Baba no doubt achieved very great success in inducing Chandorkar, the son of a violently anti-Muslim gentleman, to accept him for a Guru and then enabling him dimly to perceive the greatness of Baba as far as circumstances would permit. For further progress, there were serious handicaps. Kaka Dixit could make very rapid advance under Baba, especially during his Vanaprastha probation, that is, a period of 10 or 12 months which he spent at Shirdi away from wife and children under Baba's care. Nana also took leave and spent some time with Baba at Shirdi, may be a year or so. But still there was the difference in their outlook. Naturally therefore a comparatively greater rate of progress and greater amount of profit were derived by Kaka Dixit by reason of his greater receptivity and humility. We see, however, all this and more of Kaka Dixit, from his diary that he kept and also from his experiences published by his friends in the Sai Lila Masik. By reason of Nana's not having kept a diary of his experiences, we do not

know so much of him and there is the danger of our underrating Nana's progress. But still, as practically everything noteworthy in his advance was communicated by him to Sri B.V. Dev, Kaka Dixit, Dabolkar, etc., and as all these have been published in the Sai Lila Masik, we have to take it that the published matter roughly represents Nana's progress. It is on that assumption the observations in this chapter are based. There is a chance of error, no doubt, but the chance is but small, and risks of error have to be incurred in any biography.

Taking other prominent devotees who approached Baba, such as Sri Upasani Maharaj, Kusa Bhav, and Balakram Manker, we notice how they were able to give up everything, family, property, dignity, etc., and simply dedicate themselves to Baba's service, and managed to stay on for years with Sri Sai Baba. The consequent advance such a person derives must naturally be greater than any that one can derive when one pays only occasional though frequent visits to Baba as Nana did. Sri Upasani Maharaj stayed away from all contact with family, and Baba intended definitely to cut him off from family connections, and he stayed at the Khandoba temple at Shirdi for 3 years waiting for Baba to work upon him. In the Chapter on Upasani Maharaj, we may notice the consequent notable advance in various directions. Such advance is not to be found in the case of Nana Chandorkar who was a grihasta to the end of his life with innumerable worldly thoughts dominating him. Even though Upasani Maharaj withdrew himself from Baba before the period prescribed for tutelage was over, still the progress he made at Shirdi was continued at Kharagpur, Nagpur, and Sakori. Powers, which may be called siddhis, were off and on shooting out of him, and even Nana Chandorkar, when calling upon Upasani Maharaj at the Khandoba temple, felt the higher position which the *Pravrajita* Upasani occupied as a pupil under Baba (and as his probable or possible successor in the view of several), and showed him great respect or reverence. Kusa Bhav, though not spiritually so high, was living without any family connection for years and years under Baba, and Baba blessed him with the power to produce Sai Udhi at will and give it to all as a cure for all ills which raised him in the eyes of his numerous sishyas or followers. Balakram Manker was similarly able to dissociate himself

from family, to give up highly lucrative position in business, and even lead a life in solitude on Machendragad Hill by Baba's order, and was deriving great benefit from Baba's contact and guidance. In fact, many hoped that he would be Baba's successor on Baba's gadi. But his premature death in 1913 destroyed that hope. These three are mentioned to show that a certain dissociation from family, official position, and even property, which was possible for Kusa Bhav, Upasani, B. Manker, etc., was not possible for Chandorkar and that consequently the benefits he derived were different from those that totally (or almost totally) dissociated people derived. [This, however, is not a slur upon Nana Chandorkar.] The lines of advance for these three, namely, Upasani, Kusa Bhav, and Balakram Manker, seem so different from the lines of advance of Nana Chandorkar.

Again there seems to be some constitutional difference between some bhaktas and others. Some seem to have a special facility for having visions, trances and similar states. A Brahmin doctor, who went to South Africa and returned, had this special peculiarity, and, by gazing at Baba, he could see in Baba the form of Sri Rama and by intense prayer he derived for over a fortnight, what he calls *Pararna Ananda* i.e. the highest bliss he knew. It is not the same as *Brahmananda* evidently, which Ananda is not given but must exist inherently and be perceived by one after getting over all obstacles to one's vision of the self as Brahman. Even G. S. Khaparde, owing perhaps to the peculiarity of his smoking and other habits, if not his constitution, derived spells of what may be termed *Parama Ananda*. Frequently in G.S. Khaparde's diary, we find mention made that Baba cast some yogic glances, as a result of which for hours G. S. Khaparde was drowned in bliss. Even Mrs. Manager (i.e. Mrs. Tarabai S. Tarkhad of Poona) could derive this sort of Ananda. But we do not find anything like these spells of being drowned in bliss described as part of Nana Chandorkar's experiences. Perhaps constitutionally some do not and cannot get this experience. Emotional susceptibility seems to be an important factor in perceiving this Ananda, and intellectual vigour like Nana's seems to keep it out. The absence of these spells of bliss may not be a serious loss to one proceeding

on Nana's lines of advance. Absence of Yoga siddhis is no loss but a gain to such.

Again some devotees have a childlike faith, so very childlike that others do not reach it, being afraid at heart that that extent of credulity is either unbecoming or dangerous. 'You cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless you become as little children', said Jesus. This seems to have a strange application to the closing scene of this earthly life of devotees. Mahlsapathy had childlike faith and his end was most charming. At the close of life, he knew, though in ordinary health, that the moment of death was coming and he welcomed it, and his friends sat by his side and carried on bhajan till his last moment. And assuring all that he was going to Heaven on that day, and finishing his meal and betelnut chewing, he calmly and cheerfully passed away with Rama nama on his lips. Dixit's faith in Baba as his *Sathi Akaraka* (the last moment's companion) was firm—as Baba (who was the soul of truth, that never gave out false promises) had declared "I will carry my Kaka (HSD) in a Vimana". Dixit had a very happy (totally painless) death in the train when thinking of his Guru-God Baba and gladly thanking him for securing the train for him though he came late. The Gita verse declares that what we think of in our last moment that we become (VIII-6).

Again, there was perhaps some constitutional help for many a devotee who under Baba's influence began to realise the great truth which our scriptures proclaim, namely, that God is in everything and that the advanced sadhaka sees God in everything and sees everything as God. These are the very words of the Gita, (e.g. V 29-31, VII 19, X 20-39). But hardly ten in ten thousand amongst those that read the Gita daily as Parayana would have any experience of seeing either God in the things they behold or seeing everything that they see as God. But under Baba, a poor woman of Shirdi began to feel that a snake was really Baba. Some others developed the feeling that the dog or the beggar that approached them was really Baba. If the dog and the beggar excite in them feelings of reverence (for which purpose Baba tried to make his devotees avoid cruelty and irreverence to dogs and beggars), this is a stepping stone to the achievement of the above mentioned goal of the scriptures. One step in this

advance is to see Baba or God first and oneself next in all creatures and all creatures in oneself.

1. *Sarvabhuteshu chatmanam sarvabhutanicha atmani
ikshate yoga yukatma sarvatra samadarsanah*

(VI 29)

2. *Yo maam pascyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pascyati
Tasyaaham na pranascyami sa cha me na pranascyati*

(VI 30)

3 *Bhuteshu Bhuteshu Vichitya Dheerah
Pretya Asman Lokat Amrita bhavanti.*

These mean, respectively,—

1. The Yogi whose self has been tacked on (to Brahman), with his equal vision towards all sees the one Supreme Atman in all creatures and all creatures in the Self.
2. He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, to him I do not perish, and he never perisheth, but is always with Me.
3. The sages or wise ones find in every creature the Supreme Self and casting off their bodies become immortal.

This higher stage of advanced bhaktas is thus described in the sastras; and Baba's disciples and pupils having the perfect God-realiser Baba for their guidance should naturally be expected to reach it. Some must have reached it.

From the reminiscences of Chandorkar that are now left to us, we are unable to perceive that he reached it or was nearing it. Baba however trained several people including Nana Chandorkar in the steps necessary to enable one to consider every creature God. It is easy for us to read "*Bhuteshu Bhuteshu Vichitya Dheerah*" or "*Sarva Bhuteshucha Atmanam*" or '*Atmowpamyena sarvatra samam pascyati*' - B. G. IV.32. But in practice, it is indeed the hardest to look upon even one creature or one object as God. Why even to get the state of mind of dealing with perfect God when dealing with Baba, was and is impossible to most people. How can such persons treat a dog or a cat, a beggar or a snake, as God? In order to overcome the almost insuperable objections to treat

everything as God or as Baba, he coached up his devotees and showed them the basis for such an advance. In the case of Nana Chandorkar, he enabled him to take the first step in this direction by convincing him that the poli placed before him (Baba) and eaten by the fly was really eaten by Baba, because He was Nana's inmost soul or *antaryami* (as demonstrated by a *chamatkar* of his), and therefore, the fly's inmost soul. He could similarly show Hansraj that the cat that stole or ate away his curds was himself (Baba), because the blow given to the cat by Hansraj produced a weal on Baba in the very place of the stroke on the cat's shoulder. But how many steps can a man be pushed up a palmyra tree by one standing on the ground? One must climb up oneself. So, many persons made very slow advance in this matter. Nana's advance in this direction also appears not to have been marked by any remarkable strides of success. This power to see Baba or God in everything is said to be best achieved by putting the collyrium of love on one's eyes. A Gopi in her intense love to Sri Krishna began to see every thing dark as Krishna, such as Tamala trees or clouds just as a thief sees a police man in every bush. A lover sees his beloved's face in the moon and in everything that is beautiful. This is a peculiarity of the way in which the highly emotional mind works, and this psychological truth is pressed home in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI. If you wish to have thorough absorption in God or anything else, the course for it is that the *Dharan*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* should be perfect, that is, the most intense that the constitution is capable of. The *dhyana* may be due not necessarily to devotion or love, but may be due to lower psychological states such as hatred or fear. Hiranyakasipu hated the Lord and saw him everywhere and Ravana, in his fear of Rama, began to fear that every sound beginning with 'Ra' would denote Rama.

Yatra yatra mano dehi dhaarayet sakalam dhiya

Snehat dveshat bhayat vaapi yaati tattat sarupatam.

SB XI (9) 22

This means, 'Whenever one concentrates oneself completely, heart and soul, on any object, whether by reason of love or hatred or fear, one reaches *sarupya* of that, that is, becomes of the same form as that'. This is common experience, for,

if you are thinking only of your favourite object, all vague sounds take the name of your favoured object. A man sat in church hearing some French or Latin ritual and when asked what it was, said, 'All my eye and *Betty Martin*'. A Gopi, who went out selling curds, instead of saying 'Curds for sale', said, 'Krishna for sale' This, therefore, shows the advantage of those who are capable of such intense emotional heights. They get to *sarupya* losing themselves. No doubt these would be put down as mad people by the mass, and surely they would mostly be unfit for the ordinary work-a-day life. But they succeed in their aim, namely, reaching the Supreme goal.

Keeping these observations in mind, we should note if there is any such line of advance, at least to a noticeable extent in Nana's case. His faith in Baba was undoubtedly very great, but still his constitution, or the degree of progress made by him, prevented him from losing himself in Baba. His faith was great enough as shown in the following case. One day, when he was going along the road in company with his wife, some person came and said that his own wife had evil possession or some trouble for which Baba's udhi was wanted as a remedy. Nana, finding no udhi at hand, picked up some earth from the road, and, remembering Baba, applied it, not to the visitor's wife, but to his own wife's forehead, and told the visitor that the remedy had been applied. This shows remarkable faith of Nana in Baba. But still it does not seem to have gone up to the degree of self-annihilation by a process of emotional intensification, In BG. 9-22 Sri Krishna said—

Ananvah chintayanto maam ye janaah pari upasate

Teshaam nityaabhiyuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham.

(IX 22)

This means, Krishna says to Arjuna, 'if men think exclusively of Me (or identify themselves with Me) and serve Me completely, and perpetually contact Me, the acquisition and safeguarding of good for such people is burden borne by Me'. In the case of Baba, who is no other than Krishna, he was looking after the welfare and providing goods and safety (*Yoga Kshema*) to such Ananta devotees or children, even though they fell short of the perfect *ananya chinta, pari upasana*

and nitya abhtyukti ideal. He, however, helped people to increase the contact with him by decreasing their external contacts and activities so as to march on to the ideal. Nana marched on fairly successfully in his course —though he did not attain the required self-annihilation that some devotees of Baba achieved.

With these comparisons we should stop this chapter for several reasons: (1) Superficial readers may lay to their hearts these points on which Nana did not achieve complete success and fancy that his life was a failure. They may consequently lose their reverence for him and that would be a great mistake. The author bows down to Sri Nana Chandorkar for the marvellous progress he made and the very great good he has achieved for us all—in fact he was responsible for our Sai faith and is our God-father or God-grandfather, our spiritual atavus. (2) Comparisons with all devotees is neither possible nor desirable. (3) The comparison and contrast provided here will suffice to guide us in our attempt to get fuller ideas of the unthinkably (*Achintya*) perfect Sai Baba.

Critical and analytical studies or moral and spiritual states, and steps useful for achieving and causes of failure to achieve the same have been made or noted in this chapter at great length. It is best to set out as much of these as possible and as early as possible in the book and hence these have been applied to Nana Saheb Chandorkar. But what has been said about him applies to many other devotees whose progress is described later, though there is no express reference to that fact in later chapters. Careful readers who go through this book with a view to get a full grasp of the subject of religious progress, especially for the purpose of helping on their own development would note this application of the studies to other devotees—and, may be, to themselves. We are not the guardians or judges of other souls. Only our own is committed to our care.

CHAPTER III

Das Ganu Maharaj

After Nana Chandorkar, the logical, chronological, and the appropriate name to deal with is that of Ganpat Rao Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe, popularly known as Das Ganu Maharaj. His importance for the Sai movement consists in the fact that the rapid spread of Baba's name in Maharashtra was due very largely to his

efforts. Baba fully well foresaw or ordained it. In 1890 Das Ganu was a Constable and play actor of village plays of an obscene character. Baba drew him to himself for the double purpose of improving his (Ganus) own spiritual condition and thereafter rendering signal service to the public for the spread of Sai faith. When first he came to Shirdi, he came as the "orderly" of (i.e. constable attending on) Nana Saheb Chandorkar, and whenever Chandorkar visited Shirdi, Ganpat Rao followed him as his Constable, not at all out of faith in, or love for, Sai, but because the master compelled him to—very much like the Harijans (to whom Nandanar preached the value of Siva's nama japa) who said (Alas! perforce we have to say, SIVA, SIVA). For a very long time, Das Ganu could not appreciate Baba. Up to the end, he could not realise Baba as really Deva i.e. God or as his Guru-Deva, though he had high regard for him and his powers and wrote or sang of him with poetic skill describing Baba as *Ramaavara* i.e. God, doing lip service. That was why he went to one Islampurkar, a Brahmin Guru, to get his initiation long after he met and dealt with Baba (a step which Baba naturally did not object to when D. G. reported the fact to Baba). Anyhow Baba made a remarkable change in the personality of Das Ganu, and Das Ganu also realised how powerful Baba's influence on him was.

It has been mostly an unwilling submission on the part of Das Ganu to Sai Baba's yoke. At his earliest advent to Shirdi, Baba noted the nature of Ganpat Rao, and determined that his nature, calling and work should all be totally changed. His nature then was just that of a Police Constable who had hardly any education, but who was very clever in composing Lavani metre songs in Mahratti impromptu and in taking a female's part in lewd village dramas. He would put on female dress and dance about in the village and take great pleasure in that achievement. His great ambition was to rise in his profession. The Police Department by itself was not a particularly moral department, and for one who was ambitious to rise in it, one's regard for truth, righteousness, fair dealing, etc. would practically be nil, and scruples, conscience, and character were unwanted hindrances to efficiency. Knowing all their dangers and the real dormant capacity of the man, Baba, from the very beginning, told Das Ganu to give up both his

attachments, namely, (1) attachment to the village dance and drama and (2) attachment to the police profession. Chandorkar also pressed this upon Ganpat Rao. With great difficulty Ganpat Rao was weaned away from drama. But as for the profession, he would not give it up. The charm of holding the position of Sub Inspector (Foujdar) and lording it over people was too powerful for him to resist. When Baba said, 'Ganu, you had better give up your police service', Das Ganu replied, 'Baba, let me become a Sub Inspector (for which position I have passed the departmental examination) and hold the appointment for only one year, and thereafter, I will give it up'. Baba replied that he was not going to get the Sub Inspectorship, and that He would see to it that he did not get it. So, Baba's work was to bring in difficulty after difficulty, pressure after pressure to bear upon Ganpat Rao; and Ganpat Rao had innumerable difficulties even without Baba adding to them.

For instance, he was fond of touring to distant places of pilgrimage outside his official limits, and he would go without taking the permission of his superiors, which would not be easily granted. On one such occasion, he had gone to a shrine in the "Nizam's State" and was returning. His fellow constables were highly envious of him, and they wanted to pluck his feathers. So, when he was returning to his place, and when he was still on the Nizam's side of the river Godavari, the envious constables were on the other side watching to catch him. He noted this fact and felt that he would surely be dismissed. So, he took up the Godavari water in both of his palms and swore by that "Ganga" water, (as it is called) "Baba, let me escape this time I shall certainly give up my police service". Then he went back into the Nizam's State just a short distance, when lo! and behold, there was proof of Baba's Grace! A village Munsif came to him and told him that certain dacoits were dividing their booty secretly and all that the Village Munsif wanted was a police gentleman with authority to arrest them. So Ganpat Rao went, seized the dacoits and the booty, and proudly returned to his own station on the other side of the Godavari. When questioned how he went out without permission, his reply was that he had gone there for the seizure of dacoits and property—no doubt a falsehood. Thus he not only escaped

punishment, but he thought he had a very good chance of rising in his profession. With that thought uppermost in his mind, he was riding past Shirdi to go somewhere. Just as his horse came to Shirdi, and when he did not want to alight there but to pass on without seeing Baba, Baba was on the road and made him alight. Then Baba asked, 'Arre, who is it that swore with a palmful of water in his hand, man?' Then Das Ganu's unabashed reply was, 'What of that? Baba, I am going to resign after all, after I get the Fouzdarship'. Baba said that he would see to it that he resigned, and added 'Until a peg is driven into you, (i.e. pressure becomes painful), you will not obey'.

Das Ganu thought there was no further pressure. But pressure came. He along with three other Constables was told off to the duty of capturing a notorious dacoit, who was a terror to the whole countryside, and whose organisation was so vast and wonderful that even the Police Department was in his pay, that is, several of the Police Department were in his pay and he could checkmate their movements. Das Ganu went off to Lonivarni, a place which that famous dacoit, Khana Bhil by name, was visiting. But Khana Bhil was a man of extraordinary abilities. He had shot the other three persons nominated along with Ganpat Rao to catch him, and was determined to deal with Ganpat Rao in the same way. Ganpat Rao disguising himself as a Ramdasi was making use of the village children, learnt from them details about the visits of these robbers, and communicated their movements to the police head-quarters. Suddenly one day Khana Bhil turned up, seized Ganpat Rao by his neck, and said, 'You fellow, you are going to catch me! Do you know that it is Khana Bhil that has now caught you? Now I am going to shoot you, as I have already shot your three companions.' Ganpat Rao was in terror. He was close to Sri Rama's image. He suddenly fell at its feet and, thinking of Sai, said 'Save me. Save me. I will give up all my police efforts'. Khana Bhil was softened. Instead of shooting at both Ganpat Rao and the image, he said, 'I let you off this time. But if you again interfere in my affairs, you are a dead man. Remember.' But the ambition of Ganpat Rao was not to be quenched. **Again he got information about Khana Bhil's movements and communicated it to the authorities, with the result that a**

police force armed with carbines, etc., was sent to surround the hillock on which Khana Bhil and his men had pitched their camp. A fierce battle was fought between the dacoit gang and the police, and Khana Bhil effected his escape. Ganpat Rao knew that his life was doomed. So he went up to Nana Chandorkar, and with his good offices secured a medical certificate and got relieved of his detective duties. Thus for a second time his prayer to Baba to save his life was effectual. Again for a second time he refused to resign. Having so far successfully duped Baba, he thought he was safe. But he hardly knew how many strings Baba had to his bow.

The third occasion came and then Das Ganu was in a tight fix. When he was the second in command at the Station, the station Officer left him in charge. And Das Ganu in a lordly way wanted to enjoy his time, and went home leaving a constable in charge of the station. Just at that time, a village munsif had sent up a *thoti* with a fine collected from some person against whom a warrant had been sent for collection. That money, Rs. 32/-, was left by the thoti with the constable there in charge, without any person to witness. The constable told the thoti that the Station Officer was on leave, that no receipt would be granted then, that he might go away, and that the receipt would be sent to the village in due course. So, the poor thoti went away, and the constable swallowed up the money. Ganpat Rao knew nothing of it. However, the authorities finding that Rs. 32 had not been collected, sent up a second warrant for the collection of the fine. The party showed the receipt from the Village Munsif. The Village Munsif, when asked, said that he had sent the money to Ganpat Rao's Station, and so the enquiring officer came to the Station and asked the Station Officer who pointed out that at the particular time and date when the money came, he was on leave. Then who was in charge? Ganpat Rao was in charge. Ganpat Rao was the man who swallowed that (fine) amount of Rs. 32 was the conclusion arrived at by the enquiring officer. Ganpat Rao was asked for an explanation. He said he knew nothing. But there was no escaping the fact that money had been sent that day, and was paid at the station as the thoti testified. Then Ganpat Rao, finding that there was not only no chance of his getting the Sub Inspectorship but a good

chance of his getting into the jail, solemnly swore to Baba that this time he would positively quit service. He went further and mentioned his willingness to resign to the enquiry officer who, thereupon, made him pay up Rs. 32, and then discharged him, taking of course his resignation also. Thus Baba succeeded in making Ganpat Rao quit that service, a service, which would prevent Ganpat Rao from becoming the high spiritual personage that he was subsequently to develop into.

Baba used to call him 'Ganu'. When Ganpat Rao came and said, 'I have now left my service; I and my wife have to stand in the streets, as we have no property or income', Baba said, Ganu, I shall provide for you and your family'. (Compare Krishna's promise "*Yoga Kshemam Vahami aham*" BG IX 22). Baba then asked him to go on with his Brahminical duties, puranic studies, and kirtans at which he was excellent, From the day of his loss of service, i.e. 1903, up to this time, Ganpat Rao was never in want either for food or for clothing, and has even become the owner of some lands yielding him sufficient support. And in 1919 his wife died issue less, leaving him without any encumbrances. Baba told him to attend to his kirtans. Das Ganu was specially good at kirtans. He had a fine metallic voice, and he was a vary able performer of kirtans. He would hold an audience of 2,000 people spell-bound in rapt attention listening to him for six or eight hours, and as he never asked for even one pie and made no collections, his kirtans were popular, and in all his kirtans, he would place Baba's picture next to him and even though his katha was about Tukaram or Namdev or Jnanadev, yet he would always refer to Sai Baba as the living Sam or Satpurusha, i.e. as the present Great Saint, whom it would be a great blessing for people to have darsan of, as the very darsan would purify and benefit the visitor. As soon as his kirtans ended, people started in numbers to go to Shirdi and see Sai Baba. These numbers included high officials of good and great position, as also the poor. Thus he has been the means of sending some tens of thousands of people to Baba. He is still living (1955) and justly styled Hari Bhakta Parayana Kirtankar. Baba developed his nature and purified it by making him spend his time whenever he went to Shirdi in reading Vishnu Sahasranama at a temple there. Das Ganu

Maharaj thus got highly purified and was highly devoted to Baba. His purification and development are marked in various ways, and Baba's favour to him on the spiritual side is so vast and varied that it is impossible to sketch them out, especially as Das Ganu Maharaj is still living and we have no right to vivisect that Maharaj. We shall mention, however, a few facts showing how Sai Baba favoured him in addition to relieving him of the two great hampering curses upon him, namely, the dance mania and the Foujdar mania. Baba gave him a special capacity to understand things which others could not ordinarily understand. Baba gave him special hints on special occasions. We shall instance two of these below.

Das Ganu Maharaj wished to write a Mahratti commentary upon Amritanubhava, a famous Mahratti religious treatise, and that was considered to be impossible. A pandit told him that he could not possibly catch all the meaning of Jnana Dev, the author, and express it in his work. Das Ganu went to Baba, prayed for and immediately got his blessing. Then, he began to write his explanations of the riddles, seeming contradictions and apparently meaningless dicta of Amritanubhava. He found the heart of the author and brought it out by a number of illustrations. The illustrations he mostly drew from Baba's talk which he heard at Shirdi. So he succeeded in presenting Amritanubhava in such a way as to satisfy even keen critics; and the pandit who first considered it impossible was satisfied that Das Ganu's work was a success.

Next Das Ganu was anxious to render even a Sanskrit Upanishad, namely, Isavasya Upanishad, into Mahratti. This famous Upanishad consists of only 18 verses. It is full of great thoughts and has been considered by Mahatma Gandhi to be peculiarly important. Mahatma Gandhi said that if the whole of Hindu spiritual literature were gone leaving only this Isa Upanishad, the whole of Hindu dharma could be reconstructed with this alone. Though the Upanishad has received such high encomia, it is a very difficult and tough Upanishad even for separation of sentences and phrases in it, and much more for the interpretation of the same. Different writers have adopted widely different courses. Taking even the very first verse, the punctuation varies. Having so many difficulties in the way

of his ambition, Das Ganu Maharaj went to Baba. Baba said, 'What difficulty is there in this? You had better go, as usual, to Kaka Dixit's bungalow in Ville Parle. And there that (cooly girl) Malkarni, will give you the meaning'. People would laugh at a great pandit like Das Ganu getting interpretation of an Upanishad from a cooly girl. But all the same Das Ganu went to Kaka's bungalow. He slept there. When he woke up in the morning, he heard a girl (it must be the Malkarni mentioned by Baba, he thought) singing songs in great joy. She was praising some orange coloured silk sari, wondering at its fineness and the beauty of its borders, and the floral embroidery on it. Then he just peeped to see who the songster was. The songster had no sari. She wore a rag which was not silk, nor orange coloured, had no borders and no embroidery. He pitied the girl and got a friend to give her a sari—a small cheap sari. She wore it just one day, and went about enjoying it. But the very following day, she cast it aside, again wore her tatters and again began to sing joyously the song about the orange coloured sari and its beauty. Then Das Ganu understood the Upanishad. He found out that the girl's happiness lay not in the external sari which she had 'thrown away' (*tena tyaktena*, which means, that being thrown away) but in herself. And Isavasya Upanishad says the same thing. 'All this world', says the first verse, 'is covered by the Maya of Iswara. So *enjoy bliss*, not by having the externals, but by rejecting the externals (*Tenatyaktena*)'. '*Tena Tyaktena*' might mean being content with what God gives you. The girl was happy as she was contented. Thus Baba taught Isa Upanishad to Ganu through a cooly girl. Baba's ways of teaching were and are peculiar and different in the case of different individuals.

Das Ganu has been helped in numerous other ways, but it is sufficient here to note that Baba gave him the assurance that he would provide for his temporal welfare (*Yogakshema*) so that he might bravely and calmly start his spiritual career. And Baba kept his word, Baba always keeps his word. Baba thus provided completely for the temporal welfare of a man without any employment and any property. When he thought there was nothing for him to depend upon, Baba provided everything, and Das Ganu had always been very well off temporally. Even now he has got properties though he has transferred them to

his adopted son. As for the spiritual uplift, it is impossible to conceive of any greater benefit than wrenching one away from the two great ropes that were dragging Ganpat Rao downwards, namely, the lewd village dramas which Ganpat Rao was playing in and the soul-destroying police work, the wickedness of which would be heightened by the ambition to rise to Sub Inspectorship in double quick time. The way in which Baba responded to prayers and saved him, time and again, from dismissal or punishment would quite suffice to impress the mind of Ganpat Rao with the fact that Baba is omnipotent, is everywhere, watching and attending to his prayers, and is ever looking after him. Baba watched him at every place to which he went and took the appropriate measure that was urgently needed for his welfare. What else can be God except that which watches us everywhere and further takes adequate steps to see that harm does not befall us but real benefit is conferred on us? What is God except that which hears and grants prayer?

Baba naturally did his very best for this Das Ganu but, unfortunately, (as we see in the cases of most devotees contacting Baba) there are obstacles due perhaps to poorva karma which prevent one responding in the correct way to such high influence as Baba's. Even after so much of proof of Baba's omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and miraculous help for Ganu's benefit, Ganu did not fully derive the idea that Baba was God. So many others for whom Baba did even less were full of the faith that Baba was God. No doubt Ganu sang of Baba that he was God in fine terms set to music. But Ganu's conviction was superficial and not deep. Das Ganu's faith being very poor and very weak in Baba's divinity, Baba desired to impress on Ganu, His (Baba's) Godhead and to make him and his other disciples realise him (Baba) properly. For that purpose, he exhibited chamatkars, one of which is as follows.

On a certain occasion, Das Ganu wanted to go for a bath to the Godavari river which in ordinary parlance is termed 'Ganga' (the Ganges, the most sacred river). That river is four or five miles away from Shirdi, and when Ganu asked for permission to go to "Ganga", Baba answered, "Why go there? Is not Ganga

here?' Ganu fell very much dissatisfied. Ganu was the author of the Arti song which runs as follows and which was even being sung at Baba's puja.

Shirdi Maje Pandharipura Sai Baba Ramaavara

This means 'My Pandharpur or place of pilgrimage is Shirdi, and the God that sanctifies that place (Vittal) is Sai Baba'; that is, Sai is Mahavishnu from whose feet Ganges is perennially flowing. This song is sung by many and at least a few really think in their hearts that Sai Baba is really Maha Vishnu. For, what is Mahavishnu? Maha Vishnu is the protecting form of God. God has three functions, namely, creation, protection, and final withdrawal, which also is a form of protection. The protecting aspect of God is called Maha Vishnu. So Sai Baba, the person who has protected Das Ganu and innumerable others, and who is doing it even today on a vast scale from one end of the country to the other, is certainly exercising the functions of Maha Vishnu⁸. All Divinity is one. Call it or Him by any name and carry on your worship according to any religion and adopt any set of doctrines or metaphysical or philosophical basis for your ideas and actions, the end reached is the same, the one pure and perfect Bliss. When the goal is reached by the most advanced souls of any country or sect, the experience is the same. But before the end is reached, the modes adopted and the explanations given by sets differ so greatly sometimes as to cause religious differences of a bitter sort — and quarrels, battles or wars are waged on account of religious or sectarian zeal. The common run of men look to externals alone and the inner kernel of all religion is beyond their grasp. Sri Das Ganu on account of his poorva karma of former births and even the karma of his present earlier life could not rise to this view. Baba had to refine his nature and wash away the effects of birth, breeding and past habits. There are many methods that are adopted for this purpose. Pilgrimages, and visits to saints at those places (for many holy persons visit such places) have their use.

⁸ Reader, if you very earnestly wish to have this experience now, you can have it.

REDEMPTION NEVER IMPOSSIBLE

Amongst the important lessons to be derived from Baba's dealing with and teaching Das Ganu is the following matter of the utmost importance in the daily life of thousands of our readers. The state in which Das Ganu was in 1890 or 1892 when he approached Baba was very grave, and in the view of ordinary persons absolutely hopeless. No one would think that a man with a hoard of past karma and vicious tendencies which had struck deep root could possibly be saved from them in one life, more especially when his tastes had attracted him to a profession and to activities which gave ample scope for such tendencies. Any other person would have abandoned the task as hopeless, but Sai, like Chaitanya, i.e. Lord Gauranga, did not despair of redeeming such a soul. There are several votaries unfortunately singing the song—

Na madida karma baiavanta vaagidare

Neemaaduvadu Eno Hariye.

This means, 'O God, if the sins I have committed are so powerful, what can you do?' This despair is properly met in the Bhagavata:

NAMASMARANA

Naamno asti yaavati scaktih paapa nirharane hareh

Taavat kartum nascaknoti paatakam paataki janah

This means, "No sinner can commit so many or so heinous sins as to make it impossible for God's name to redeem him." It is folly and ignorance of a highly self-destructive sort on the part of a sinner to limit the power of God to redeem him. Hence neither Sai nor Chaitanya despaired of redeeming desperate characters. Just as Chaitanya drew Madho and Jagai from the depths of an almost bottomless pit to the heights of saintliness, so Baba has done in the case of Das Ganu.

The words used in the first stanza above quoted show the power of God's name. It is just as well to point out that practically God's name and God are not different. The name has a power because it is God's name. If it is the name of the devil or any other person, it would not have such power. But the name is so closely intertwined with the object that even philosophers confound the two.

There is a school of nominalist philosophers who say that everything is only name and that there is nothing beyond. Commonsense rebels against this view and most people join the conceptualist or realist school saying that objects exist apart from names and we have a conception of an object to which name is applied as a handle. No doubt the cleverness of songsters and poets makes them attach undue importance to the bare fact of the name as in the following stanza:—

Ninyaako ranga ninhang yako

Nee naama bala ondu iddare sako

This means, 'O, Ranga (or God), what is the use of your prowess or anything else except your name? The power of your name is sufficient'. The songster begins to instance the cases of Draupadi, Gajendra, Ajamila, etc., to prove that the name was sufficient in all these cases to save them and that God himself was not wanted for the purpose of saving. This is obviously absurd in the case of Draupadi and Gajendra where God himself took action or appeared and saved the devotees. Only in the case of Ajamila, there is some degree of justification for the poetic flair, and perhaps some basis for it in the Bhagavata stanza which runs as follows:—

Etavata alam agha nirharanaya pumsam

sankritanam bhagavato gunakarma namnam

Aakruscya putram aghavan yat Ajamilo apt

Naarayana iti Mriyamanaiyaya muktim.

This means. To wipe off sins of men, it is enough if they go on with *sankirtanam*, that is, good singing or recital of God's *gunas*, (qualities), *karma* (deeds), and *nama* (names). (For example) Ajamila, though a great sinner, by barely calling out the name of his child Narayana at the moment of death obtained mukti. This seems a basis for saying that the bare utterance of God's name, even though the utterance was only of the name of the child bearing God's name, at the moment of death, would have the effect of saving a man. The proposition thus stated seems too wide and too wild. In the case of Ajamila, however, the man had been formerly a great bhakta leading a very pure life and

would have constantly used the term Narayana with very holy associations. Some of those associations might have dawned upon his mind when he uttered that name with reference to his child Narayana and therefore made Lord Narayana send his angels to save Ajamila who was just about to be dragged away by the myrmidons of Yama to Hell for punishment for his numerous sins. No doubt Vyasa adds a general statement—

Sanketyam parihasyam va sthobham helanam eva va

Vaikunta naama grahanam ascasha agha haram viduh.

This means, '(Even) where God's name happens to be used merely as a token or symbol agreed upon by people to represent something worldly or is uttered in jest or by way of ridicule, still the utterance of God's name removes every sin.' Using God's name in jest or ridicule is known to many. People swear by God for purposes of emphasis without thinking of holiness. All the same, if they have been listening to bhajans, kirtans, sacred reading, etc., in which these names of God have been associated with things holy, the effect of ridicule or jest may not completely wipe off the holy associations of those names. As for *Sanketyam*, an instance may be given. Amongst a South Indian community, the name Govinda or "*Midasannam Govindappa*" (i.e. the narrow necked Govinda) is used to denote the drink bottle. Even for that purpose, if the name is constantly used, the utterance of Govinda's name will have some merit and may help in salvation. Anyhow, apart from all the above and apart from the school of nominalism, the value of God's name consists in the fact that people have very little knowledge of what the substance of God is, and they have to handle God only through the name. Therefore, as stated in Sainatha Manana, 62 '*Abhinnatvar Naama Naaminoh* i.e. there is no difference between name and the possessor of the name (in effect.) This may remind us of modern philosophies which doubt whether in every object there is any "substance" behind attributes, or appearances and whether the attributes or appearances are anything more than mere names or ideas.

Coming back to the question of the use of God's name for eradicating sins from one's nature, we find that Valmiki and other authors of great works on

ethics, ancient and modern, stress the importance of the constant recall to the mind of God and his qualities, especially through japa, japa being so holy as to make the mind get drowned in God so as to justify the remark of Lord Krishna—*Yajnaanaam Japa Yajno Asmi*, that is, "Of all yajnas, I am the yajna consisting of Japa". Japa is the *sankirtanam* above referred to. When the name is uttered, the guna and karma above referred to follow immediately into the mind of the japa karta by the law of association of ideas. That is why people are content to begin with a repetition of the holy names even when not attended with perfect realisation of the holiness of the name as in the case of the hunter who repeated "*Mara, Mara*" and became the Rishi Valmiki. Many a man goes on repeating like a parrot the names he finds either in a book or uttered by some other persons. But gradually as the repetition goes on, the sacred influence pours in especially if he has the good fortune of having the company of the other person or persons who are inspired by that holy influence and if the surroundings as in a temple or bhajan hall are specially favourable. That is why Baba asked Das Ganu to take up Vishnu Sahasranama and retreat from the crowds of the Dwarakamayee and go to a sequestered temple like the Vittal temple in the village and go on there with his frequent recitals or repetitions of Sahasranama. Baba's advice in this matter was not confined to Das Ganu. He gave similar advice to Shama and in fact took away a Ramadasis's Sahasranama and handed it over to him so that he may have the advantage of the Sahasranama japa, though poor Shama did not know how to read Sanskrit, the conjunct consonants of which defy the poor skill of villagers like Shama to read or make them out. The Vishnu Sahasranama is so vast and the import of the thousands of Names, is so great that any one who goes through them carefully with the help of Sankara or other Bhashya thereon must be struck by the fact that powerful material imbedded in Vishnu Sahasranamam must suffice for the purification of any soul. The experience of thousands justifies them in the belief that what is claimed in the Vishnu Sahasranama stotra itself is right. That stotra says at the end that a person making a parayana thereof will obtain issue if he is issueless, wealth if he has no wealth, power, fame, glory and success if he is without these and, it adds that

sins of ages would be washed off. In order to give the benefit of the Sahasranama to those who have unfortunately not the time nor the opportunity to repeat, the bare repetition of one name contained therein, namely, the name 'Ram' would be equivalent to the merit of repeating all the thousand names.

Sri Raama Raama Raameti

Rame Raame Manorame

Sahasranaama tattulyam

Raamanaama Varaanane.

That is, 'One who repeats only the name of Rama will obtain the merit of repeating the Sahasranama itself.' We must note also that Sankaracharya gives the advice.

Gey am Geeta Naama Sahasram

Dhyeyam Srtpati Rupam Ajasram.

This means, 'What you have to recite is (1) the Gita and (2) the Vishnu Sahasranama, and what you have to think of in your mind all the time is the form of the Lord'. That is, the repetition of Sahasranama or Rama *nama* is best, if it is accompanied by a mental figure of the Lord, as no doubt the mental figure of the Lord helps in removing all sin and raising one to the heights of spirituality or Godhead. That may explain why Baba advised so many of his bhaktas to repeat Sahasranama or Rama *nama*. For example he gave the advice to Mrs. G. S. Khaparde, who was massaging him and whom he massaged in turn, "Say, 'Rajaram, Rajaram,' constantly; that would remove all troubles and take you to the Lord." Baba also told N.R. Sahasrabuddhe that he was to repeat Ram Nam into which he had already been initiated. Also he told M. W. Pradhan. that he must repeat the 13 lettered mantra into which he had already been initiated, namely, 'Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama'.

Baba was not content with merely giving advice. He preached only what he himself practised, and he told H.S. Dixit (Gospel 195) that he had been going on with Hari Nama Japa constantly as a result of which Hari (God) appeared before him, and that thereafter his giving of medicines was needless, for his bare giving of udhi with remembrance of Hari would suffice to cure all ills. He also said

(Gospel 198) that he had heart disease (literal or metaphorical) and that he kept Vishnu Sahasranama close to the heart and that Hari descended from the Sahasranama and cured the trouble.

But whatever Baba did, Das Ganu stuck mostly to his old set of ideas which formed the foundation for his spiritual progress. He could not get rid of the idea that the great thing for him to do was to get to Pandharpur, the Bhooloka Vaikuntam as it is called, in Asvin and Kartik months and see the holy image of Vittal there and worship it. That Vittal was God. It alone was God. And if he was to get vision of God it must be by that form appearing before him in a vision.

Das Ganu was told by Baba to go through Bhagavata reading in 7 days (this is called *Saptaha*) and he then told Baba that he would go on with *Saptaha* and Baba must see to it that he (Das Ganu) got sakshatkar as the result. 'If there is intense (*Bhav*) concentration, then Sakshatkar can be had' was what Baba gave as answer. Ganu went through Saptaha. But there was no sakshatkara for the obvious reason that Ganu's mind could not attain the needed intensity of concentration.

When he was in this mentality, NGC, his former master (for this was in 1912 or so when Ganu had retired from service) was asking him to stay on for Asvin at Shirdi and do his *kathas* there. At once Das Ganu thought that Baba was compelling him through N G C to keep off from Vittal at Pandharpur. His thought then was "How is he (Baba) God, who keeps me away from God (Vittal) at Pandharpur?" Baba noting his thought told Nana Chandorkar to send him away to Pandharpur, and so he went and returned later on to Shirdi. Then he came to Baba and said, 'When will you give me Sakshatkar?' (Paragraph 129 of B.C. & S.). Baba said, 'You see Me. This is Sakshatkar. I am God'. Then Das Ganu said, 'I expected you would say so. But I am not satisfied with it'. Das Ganu considered that Vittal of Pandharpur alone was God, and not the Sai form that he saw at Shirdi. He concluded that it was not in his destiny to have Sakshatkara of Vittal. But to understand Baba's answer, we might refer to a parallel passage in St. John's Gospel, Chapter XIV, verses 8 to 14. There, Phillip, the follower of Jesus said, 'Lord, show us the Father. And it suffices us'. Jesus says to him, "Have I

been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? The Father that dwelleth in Me. He doeth the works (i.e. miracles or chamatkars). Believe me that I am in the Father and He is in Me, or else believe me for the very works' sake. If Ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. I am in my Father and you in Me and I in *you*.⁹

This peculiar lack of faith of Das Ganu was not noticed by himself till after Baba left the body. In 1919, that is, a year after Baba shed his mortal coil, Das Ganu was at his usual place, Handed, where there was a saint, with wonderful spirituality, on a rock. When others went to see that saint, he received them. But whenever Das Ganu tried to see him, he evaded him. But on one occasion in 1919, when his wife died, he sent some food to that saint and saw him later. Das Ganu wanted to know why the saint was evading him. Then the saint answered, 'You call yourself a Kirtankar. Why then have you "Ahamkar" (Egotism)?' Das Ganu pleaded that every one had Ahamkar, and that it was impossible to avoid it. Then that saint said, 'Shall I tell you what sort of Ahamkar you have? Is not Sai Baba your Guru? And shall I say what you have done with him?' Das Ganu said, 'Yes'. The saint asked, 'Did not Baba produce water from his feet, and what did you do with it? You sprinkled it on your head, but would not put it into your mouth, because you are a Brahmin and the Ganga was coming from the feet of the mosque dwelling Baba. Is it not Ahamkara of yours?' Das Ganu felt the force of the saint's observations. Das Ganu's inability to think of Baba as pure Vittal or God is an instance where a person gets very great benefits from Baba but something or other hinders his deriving the fullest benefit as prejudices die hard and old habits cannot be easily erased.

We shall give a few examples of how Baba helped Das Ganu temporally and spiritually. Once when Das Ganu and Bere, an agricultural inspector, were to leave Shirdi for Kopergaon to catch a train for which there was plenty of time, they went to take Baba's leave. Baba in giving the leave, said "Start at once, don't stop but go straight to Kopergaon." They acted on his advice. Other

⁹ This means for ordinary men, **God** is to be seen only by regarding as God a highly gifted Saint evidently filled with Divinity and .showing his divinity by performance of **superhuman** acts called miracles.

tongawallahas told them to wait and go with them on that dangerous road to have the benefit of their company. They however followed Baba's advice and drove straight on and arrived safe at the Kopergaon station. The other tongawallahs who came up later were in time to catch the train but they were waylaid by highway robbers. Baba's advice had saved Bere and Ganu from that mishap.

Baba similarly tried to save Das Ganu from being attacked by the inner enemies (*Kama, Krodha*) also. Baba set before him the ideal of being totally free from those six enemies. That, however, was no joke. Like so many other devotees, this apostle also had his slips. But Baba very kindly pulled him up and corrected him off and on. For instance, on one occasion there was a feast at Shirdi where sira was prepared and distributed. Baba asked Ganu, "Did you get sira at that person's house?" "No, Baba" said Ganu, "that man is my enemy and did not invite me." Baba, at once rebuked him and said, "What is this sira and who eats it? Do not say of anyone that he is your enemy". Baba wanted to point out to him that he is the soul which neither eats nor has any other physical function and that all souls are in essence one and the same, viz., Paramatma. To one who has realised himself as Paramatma, there can be no enemy at all.

Compare Shri Sankara's saying in Charpata Panjarika stotra.

Sarvasmin api pascya aafmaanam

Sarvatra utsrija bheda ajnaanam

Tvayi mayi cha anyatra eko Vishnuh

Vyartham kupyasi sarva sahisnuh

which means, "The one Vishnu (God) is in you, in me and others; all he endures. Your anger is senseless. See the (same) Atman in every one. Differentiation (or discrimination) is ignorance. Avoid it everywhere." Sai Baba has stressed the same truth of identity of all souls not merely on Das Ganu but also on R. B. Purandhare, Narayan Ashram, etc. It goes without saying that Das Ganu could not possibly rise to the desired height of realizations of unity of all souls, or the perception of God in all or any creatures.

The truths taught by Baba are so peculiar to each and applicable and intelligible only in special circumstances. Hence, we must content ourselves with only one more illustration and stop. Das Ganu Maharaj was a very severe critic and occasionally uttered words that wounded the hearts of others and produced other evil effects. On one occasion, he had used hard words and defamatory language against a devotee living at Shirdi, who had done splendid work to make Sai Samsthan highly attractive and who drew numerous influential and other people to Baba's feet. When Das Ganu vented one of his frequent abuses against that devotee, Baba sent for him and pointed out that the work of attracting devotees to Baba's feet was rightly prized and practised by Das Ganu himself on a vast scale and yet he was defaming a person who carried on the same work and he thereby hindered that work. Baba thus made him acknowledge his error and insisted on his prostrating himself before that devotee and begging pardon. So Das Ganu adopted that advice and prostrated himself before that devotee and prayed for pardon. He thus gained more self-control and more humility, and also noted with appreciation the value of the lesson taught in Bhagavata 11th Skanda.

Na stuvita na nindeta kurvatah saadhu asaadhu vaa

Vadato guna doshaabbyam varjitah samadrik munih"

which means, 'the sage must have equal vision and should neither eulogise the doers or utterers of good nor decry the doers or utterers of evil.'

Before closing this chapter, it is our duty to draw prominent attention to the chief merits and excellences of Das Ganu Maharaj. He is well known not merely as a performer of Kirtanas (Harikathas) with great ability for about fifty years, but also as a composer and writer of saintly lives. Even before 1903, his literary skill made him produce fine verses on Sivaji, the national hero, for use at the Ganapati utsava in Maharashtra. As verses on Sivaji rouse up patriotism and the National spirit, which the foreign rulers then in power dreaded, he was called on by his Inspector to explain how he, a Government servant, took this prominent part in helping on a national movement. His answer was that he was an "Asukavr, that verses in Lavani metre flowed out of him at the barest request of

anybody and that the request of some one made him sing impromptu the song or verses on Sivaji. As a proof he offered to compose impromptu verses on the officer himself at once. The officer wished to test the truth of the statement and asked him for verses on himself (the officer). Ganu's *Asukavitva* or poetic genius was equal to the occasion. At once, he sang up the high qualities (real or fancied) of the officer, in lavani metre and in a few minutes there were numerous verses on the excellences of the officer who was greatly pleased and dropped the charge against Ganu then known merely by his police No (e.g. 808). Ganu could say with Alexander Pope that he "lisped in numbers for the numbers came." We need not draw the inference that his works were without depth of thought or other poetic attractions. By steady practice, he acquired considerable mastery of Mahrathi, his mother tongue. Some of his works were prescribed as text books once by the Bombay University. All his works are on noble topics. Mostly it is biography of the saints that he wrote. His command of Ovi, Dindi and other metres was excellent. An abundant use of alliteration and other figures of speech adorned his sonorous writings. Kirtankars who wished and wish to deliver kathas on famous saints could and can easily pick up one of his innumerable stories and please their audiences with parrot-like repetition of it. Even now, any one anxious to spend his time over saintly biography cannot do better than going through the following works (which have earned for him the title, the modern Mahipati, as Mahipati was the famous composer of the works dealing with ancient or medieval saints, in his works Santalilamrita etc.)

(1) Santakathamrita

(2) Arvachina Bhaktalilamrita

(3) Bhakta Saramrita

He began these works almost from 1903 when he quit service. And in these he incorporated the seven chapters (or kathas) which embodied Sai Baba's lilas or life and teachings. He is responsible for the discovery and publication of Sai Baba's early life and tutelage at Selu under Venkusa, which he found to be another name for Gopal Rao Deshmukh, ruler of Selu in Jintur Parganna. Baba had said that he had been delivered by his fakir foster mother to the Selu ruler,

who became his master, Guru and all-in-all. Freed from service shackles, Ganu started his research, ran upto Selu and discovered from Srinivas Rao, the Subedar of Selu in 1903, the ballads and family papers referring to his grandfather's grandfather, viz Gopal Rao Desmukh, the wonders his Bhakti performed, the conquests his military prowess achieved and the Moslem woman's child that became his devoted attendant and disciple to whom he, Gopal Rao (Venkatesa), gave initiation and the fact that at his (Gopal Rao's) grand passing away or Ascension (similar to Parikshit's passing away), the remains had to be interred and that they were interred in the *garba gruha* of Venkatesa temple that was erected thereon (as Gopal Rao was identified with Venkatesa or "Venkusa") and that it still stands and attracts the devotees of the surrounding places.

As this early history is very highly prized by Sai devotees and is essential for a proper understanding of Baba, their obligation to Das Ganu Maharaj is very deep. The earliest books on Sai Baba were the three chapters that Ganu produced and published in 1906 with the aid of funds contributed by H. V. Sathe.

Even during Baba's life in the flesh, Ganu was the person to deliver the annual harikathas (from 1914) at Shirdi at Baba's urus, the Ramanavami Utsava; and he has been keeping up the tradition of conducting that utsava for the last forty years.

Das Ganu Maharaja's frequent kirtans throughout Maharashtra have raised him in the estimation of all whether they are devoted to Sai Baba or not. His eminence may be seen from the fact that he was the President of the All India Sai Devotees' Conference held at Coimbatore in 1948.

He is the one surviving link with the nineteenth century amongst Baba's followers. He is ranked first among Baba's apostles, if we go by the number of devotees drawn to Baba. So many thousands learnt of Baba from him and have subsequently visited Baba or Shirdi and made Baba their own life long possession. Such a towering personality he is, despite his shortcomings. He had no English education, no contact with western culture and has no idea of the present day advance of modern civilization.

This eminent person however had his faults and foibles. Which human being is there free from these? Some have been noted in this sketch. Some others exposed him to attack from others. Even the Sansthan authorities had occasion to find fault with him. But after all is said and done. Das Ganu is a great soul, the living monument of Baba's might and kindness.

The chief lesson devotees learn from a .study of his life is that Baba, the wondrous God-realiser can, turn the most hopeless material into saintly grandeur. What was Ganu's condition as a Rs 11 constable in 1890 or 1892 and what is his state now? This spiritual alchemist that turns baser nature into the gold of saintliness, that could turn a petty minded lewd constable into the moulder of spiritual destinies of tens of thousands, this Sai Baba,— what can he not accomplish for each of us? "*Kshipram Bhavati Dharmatma, Scascvat Scantim nigachchati*" i.e. "Quickly he becomes virtuous and attains permanent peace" is what Sri Krishna promised in the Gita for even sinners that approached Him. That he, as Sri Sai Baba, has performed and proved true in many a case, including the case of Das Ganu Maharaj.

Apart from the thousands of pages that Das Ganu's big works cover, there are several minor pieces by which he will ever be remembered. The Shirdi Arti includes several of these bits, which have sunk deep into the hearts of devotees and which will continue as long as the Shirdi Shrine and Artis last. For instance:

*Shirdi Maajhe Pandharipura Sai Baba Ramaa Vara,
Suddha Bhakti Chandra Bhaaga Bhaava Pundalika jaga,
Yaho yaho avaghe Jana Kara Babasi Vandana,
Ganu Mhane Baba Sayee Dhamva Pava Majhe Ayi*

which means "Shirdi is my Pandharpur (the most holy shrine for Vaisnavites) and God worshipped there is Sai Baba (i.e. Sai is Vittal or Narayana). The holy river called Chandrabhaga found at Pandharpur is represented at Shirdi by pure devotion, and in that river the holiest spot, viz. Pundalika Temple is represented at Shirdi, by intense concentration. All you people, come up, come up and do reverence to Sai Baba. Ganu says. Oh Sai Baba Mother mine, run up and

catching me in your arms, caress me." This intense appeal has caught the fancy of lakhs of people and this song is sung at Pooja and Bhajan all over India.

Two brilliant prayers of Garni in Hindi are also embodied in the Shirdi Arti and are very popular.

Pada (41)

Sai rahama najara karanaa, bachchomka paalana karana

(Burden)

Jaanaa thumane jagat pasaara sabahi jhuta jamaana

(Sai) /

My andhaa hoom bandaa aapaka, mujhako prabhu dikhalaana (Sai)

2

Daasa garni kahe aba kyaa bolum, thaka gayee

merirasana (Sai)

3

which means

O Sai show your mercy, protect this little baby (Burden)

1. *The expansive Universe, you know is a mass of deception*

(Burden)

2. *I your slave am blind. Reveal the Lord to me (Burden)*

3. *Says Ganu, How can I say aught more? Exhausted is my tongue. (Burden)*

Pada (12)

Rahama najara karo aba more Sai, thuma bina

Nahi mujhe maabaapabhayi (Burden)

My andhaahoom bandhaa thumaara

Mynaajanoo Alla-ilahi

1

Khalii jamaanaa myne gamaaya

Sathi aakharakaa, kiya na koyi (Burden) 2

Apane masidakaa jhaadoo ganoo hai

malils hamaare, thuma Baaba Saayi (Burden) 3

which means,

Show unto me, Now thy mercy

For excepting thee I have nobody.

No father, mother, brother (Burden)

1. *Your slave am I, Sightless is my eye
I do not now descry, Aught of the Deity (Burden)*
2. *Down have I fallen to the earth.
For my last moment, no friend I made (Burden)*
3. *Ganu is (but) the broomstick of your mosque.
You are our Lord and Master O Sai Baba (Burden)*

The above named pieces which have already attracted Sai devotees have been included in the Nandaneep Picture *Shirdiche Sri Sai Baba*, the new Sai film exhibited at the Majestic Theatre at Bombay. These will serve to attract thousands of others to Sai Bhakti and Das Ganu will be endeared to the heart of new devotees as he is to the old; both will pray:—May Hari Bhakta Parayana Das Ganu Maharaj be spared to us for a long time to carry on his Sai service and service to Mankind.

P. S :—The original verses giving the phalasaruti of Vishnu sahasranama have not been quoted above because they are too long and also because editions differ in the wording and numbering of the verses. But in this note we might as well give some of them as they might strike some readers as worthy of their attention. They are numbered 130, 142, and 152 in one of the editions.

*130 Vasudevascrayo Martyo Vasudevaparayanah
Sarvapapa Viscuddhatma Yaati Brahma sanaatanam*

i.e. One who makes Vasudeva (i. e. Maha Vishnu) his goal and refuge is purified of all sins and reaches the Eternal Brahman.

*142 Namnaam sahasram yo adhite Dwadasvam Mama sannidhow
Sa nirdahati paapaani Kalpakoti scatani cha*

i.e. He who repeats this sahasranama in my presence, on a Dwadasi day will have his sins (i.e. sinful Karma) burnt out— even sins numbering trillions. (The mention of the special excellence of the Dwadasi day does not affect the merit of the repetition on other days).

And

152 Aarta Vishanna scithilascha bheetah

ghoresha cha Vyadhisu vartamanah
Sankeertya Naarayana scabda maatram;
Vimukta dhukha sukhino bhavantu

which means: —

Those in trouble, dejected, shattered, the terror stricken, and those suffering from loathsome diseases, let them repeatedly utter the name Narayana, be freed from grief and become happy.

CHAPTER IV

H.S. Dixit

The next person of whom an account should be given in Sai history is H.S. Dixit (Hari Sitaram Dixit), a well known solicitor of Bombay. The reasons for giving him prominent mention so early in Baba's history is that he was very largely responsible for the establishment and progress of Shirdi Sai Sansthan, the affairs of which were managed by him as Hony. Secretary very ably and enthusiastically up to the time of his death, i.e., 5-7-1926. He was also responsible for drawing large numbers to Shirdi and filling them with admiration and enthusiasm for Sai Baba. The 'Sai Lila Masik', the Mahratti monthly organ of the Sai Sansthan, which had the same result, was mainly his work, up to July 1926, most of his experiences and those of his friends (numbering 151 and more) swelling the first four volumes of that journal, and still giving excellent guidance to devotees.

H. S. Dixit was born in 1864 of high caste Nagari Brahmin parents enjoying a high position and affluence at Khandwa. His scholastic career was bright as he secured a first class in Matric and good marks in F.A., B.A, and LL.B. He very soon settled himself as a leading solicitor at Bombay, and his name frequently appeared in the Law Reports and in the press as distinguishing himself as an able advocate in sensational cases, e.g. Bhavnagar Exposures, Sedition trials against Poona Vaibhava, Lok B.C. Tilak and Globe and Times of India, etc. He attained great fame and wide popularity and commanded high esteem both with the people and the Government. He had numerous public activities, political,

social, municipal, etc., by means of which he was rendering good and valuable service to the public. In politics, he was in the Indian National Congress, and he was the redoubtable follower of Sir Pherozesha Mehta. He was an elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council from 1901 till he gave it up to devote himself to spiritual progress under Sai Baba. He was also an elected fellow of the Bombay University, a Notary public, and Justice of the Peace. He achieved great fame by his bold speeches (e.g. by being the sole protestor against Valedictory address to H. E. Lord Sandhurst who prosecuted Tilak) and action in the Councils. He helped bodies by serving on Committees with his keen intellect and strenuous observation and study. He was Secretary of the Indian National Congress of 1904 at Bombay wherein D. Nowrojee stated its goal to be attainment of Swarajya. He rapidly rose by his influence and ability to greater and greater positions of honour and, had he continued in that line, he would surely have achieved a Knighthood, membership of the Executive Council and appointment as Commissioner of some Province with ample emoluments and gunfire salutes. But his destiny and rinanubandha drew him to other lines, and the turning point was what looked like a mischance. He was in the Bombay Corporation also as a Councillor; and he frequently served on other public bodies. He was a patriotic and self-sacrificing man, and for the sake of principle and public good, he readily resigned his position in the Corporation, and worked hard for national welfare. About 1906 he went to England. There he had some accident in which his leg was injured. In spite of repeated efforts, the injury could not be cured. The limping impeded free movement, as there was pain if he walked a few furlongs. Not only did it make him look awkward, but also it made him less fit for his numerous activities, personal, domestic, political, legal and public, and thus had the double effect of giving him an inferiority complex and a disgust for these aspects of life, thus preparing him for the nobler and holier life. About 1909, Nana Saheb Chandorkar advised him to go and see Sai Baba, the wonderful personality at Shirdi, who might cure his lameness, the same year he went to Ahamadnagar in connection with some Council election business to the house of Sardar Kaka Saheb Mirikar, who was a Sai bhakta, and who had with

him a huge picture of Sai Baba. Dixit saw the picture and his reverence was heightened.

Learning of Dixit's desire to go to Baba, he (Sardar) sent for Madhava Rao Deshpande otherwise known as Shama, Baba's constant attendant, who had gone to Ahamadnagar, and asked him to take Dixit to Baba. Accordingly, Shama took him to Baba in 1909. This very first experience which Dixit had in connection with Baba strengthened his attachment to and admiration for Baba, especially because he had from infancy a great desire to be with sadhus and saints. He repeated his visits to Shirdi frequently, and in 1910 resolved to have a building of his own there. So the foundation stone was laid for a wada there in December 1910, popularly known afterwards as Kakawada or Dixit wada. The work was pushed through and completed in five months (i.e.) in April 1911. From the very beginning Kaka wanted only a small room for himself upstairs for Ekanta Dhyana (solitude and meditation). The rest of the building was used by pilgrims i.e., the public.

Baba's kindness towards him was manifested from the very beginning, and Baba expressed this to others also. He told Anna Saheb Dabolkar 'Kaka Saheb is a good man. Be guided by what he says'. He told R.B. Purandhare to be with Kaka Saheb and assist him. The greatest interest in a saint for any serious minded person is, and ought to be, spiritual interest. So, though originally Dixit's idea was to go to Baba for the cure of his lameness, he soon gave up that idea and said 'Lameness of the body does not matter much', and wanted Sai to cure the lameness of his soul. Sai made distinct promises to Dixit, whom he always called 'Kaka', meaning uncle. As many persons called him 'Kaka', Sai Baba also called him 'Kaka'. One of the early notable statements of Baba was "I will take my 'Kaka' in a vimana" (B.C.S.,100) meaning thereby that he would give Kaka a happy end— *Anaayaasa Marana* and *Sadgati*. Baba did give him both as will appear from what follows.

Dixit in 1909 was a leading solicitor with a highly lucrative practice and had made his name in notable trials. He had abundance of social contact and great influence in social and political matters. In 1909 he was only 45 years old, and he

had a very good prospect of amassing much wealth and achieving many honours in social and political matters also. Perhaps due to early contact with saints, such as Datta Maharaja, his mind, however, was drawn away from worldly attractions, and the meeting with such a wonderful personality as Baba gave a powerful impetus. On account of rinanubandha Baba drew him (see B.C.S. 502). Almost from the beginning of his contact with Baba he resolved to have Satsanga with Baba, and to embark on a spiritual career under Sai's guidance, whatever may be its consequence on his worldly affairs. Though his income was ample, his generosity and liberality left very little fluid resources remaining with him and, barring his three bungalows at Bombay, Ville Parle, and Lonavla, which did not yield any income, he had no other property. Yet Sai's attraction being strong, his visits to Shirdi were more and more frequent and his attention to practice was greatly diminished. One consequence of this diminution was that his partners in the solicitor business, viz., Rao Bahadur S. Narayandas and Dhanji Shah, broke up their partnership with him, and he had to form a new firm with a newly enrolled advocate Purushotham Rai Markhad for his partner. That gentleman also, on account of Dixit's frequent absence and lack of interest, withdrew from his partnership. Other partners also, Maneklal, etc., very soon left him alone or rather he left them very soon, and his income from law became very little. From 1911 onwards, his practice may be said to have been nil, though Baba asked him to go to Bombay to practise. He obeyed Baba and went to Bombay, but returned soon as his heart was at Shirdi and not at Bombay. All his friends, acquaintances, and admirers were astonished when he closed his lucrative practice in 1912, and several people were saying that 'A Fakir called Sai Baba had cast a fascination on him that pushed him to Shirdi and made him crazy'.

Sai Baba distinctly undertook the full care of Dixit and his family to enable him to carry out his spiritual work. Baba's express words to Kaka were '*Kakatula Kalji Kazli Mala sara Kalji Ahe*'. That is, 'Kaka, why should you have any anxiety or care? All care and responsibilities are mine'. (B C.S. 29). On the first occasion when he said this, Baba gave him indisputable proof that the undertaking, though vast and unlimited by time and circumstances, was real. No ordinary man with

human powers will or can give such an undertaking. But it was Baba, possessed of divine powers, that gave it. When at Shirdi Baba gave this undertaking, Kaka's daughter, aged about eight, was in his bungalow at Ville Parle, and was playing close to a huge almirah with a large number of big dolls in it. She climbed up the almirah, and the same (with all the dolls) fell upon her, but strangely enough, no dolls fell upon her; and no damage was done to her by the fall except the breaking of her bangles and the consequent scratch. Kaka learnt of this incident only later, and understood what divine power and kindness were in Sai (his Gurudeva) when he gave the undertaking, which he fulfilled thus at once at Ville Parle.

Dixit could never forget that Sai's powers and nature were divine, and that all responsibility for him and his family rested on Baba's divine shoulders, and that there was no need to apprehend any harm. His heart was free from anxiety, fear or worry though lucrative practice, with high social and political position and prospects, was lost by his clinging to Sai at Shirdi ignoring his worldly affairs. Ordinarily the change from affluence to lack of funds would be painful. But in the case of Kaka Saheb, his habits were very simple. He reduced his needs to the minimum, and avoided every sort of luxury or unnecessary expenditure. The loss of income or wealth would be considered a great evil by others; but he, as the "Ankita" or earmarked child of Baba (who undertook all responsibilities), and as a student of the spiritual life and a special student of Bhagavata, remembered what Lord Krishna says in Skanda 10, Adhyaya 27. *Tarn Bhramscayaami sampatbhyo yasya cha ichchaami anugraham i.e.* 'I deprive him of all wealth, whom I wish to bless'. His keeping away from courts, society, and public work might make life dull and insipid to him but he realised that he was being trained by the Sadguru for something higher, i.e., Sadgati, by shedding the popular confusion of wealth with welfare and of enjoyments with happiness.

For a person steeped in worldliness and spending 95 per cent of his time in worldly company, all chances of spiritual progress depend upon sequestration and solitude and entire absorption in holy company amidst holy surroundings. Therefore it is that our sacred books prescribe that after Grihasthasrama has

been enjoyed to a certain extent, we should retire and live in the forest, i.e.. in Vanaprastha Asrama (SB XI(18) 1-11). Kaka Saheb had already 25 years of practice and worldly Grihasthasrama and was ripe therefore for Vanaprasthasrama. In his case, however, he had no necessity to go to a reserved forest. His life at Shirdi from 1912 onwards (i.e. from his fortyeighth year) may be considered to be his Vanaprasthasrama. To make that effective, i.e., to give him Vanaprastha Asrama. Baba told him. 'Kaka, remain in your wada upstairs. Do not go here or there. Do not come here (even to the Dwarakamayi)' which was crowded and distracting. Kaka obeyed this injunction strictly. Then he found his absence at the darsan of Baba for 2 O' Clock Arti very painful. Through Shama he prayed and obtained permission to attend it and the Arti at Chavadi. Thus Baba kept him for nine months in solitude. This is strict Vanaprastha or Vanavasa. Alarmed by the change, his wife at Ville Parle tried to give him her company and came to Shirdi. At Kaka wada, ladies should not go upstairs; that was the rule. When Shama broached the question to Baba whether during his wife's stay downstairs, Kaka should go down for sleep or sleep upstairs only, Baba emphatically said that Kaka must sleep upstairs. Thus Kaka's Brahmacharya and rigorous tapas were maintained, and his wife returned quickly to Ville Parle. One the occasion of her departure, Sai Baba repeated his assurance that he was entirely responsible for Kaka Dixit. He told her 'Have no fears at all about Kaka, / *will took after him myself.*

The regular study by Kaka (prescribed by Baba) when he was upstairs was an excellent purificatory preparation for self-realisation and God-realisation through bhakti and jnana. Kaka had gone through Harivarada, i.e., a Maharatti commentary on the 10th Skanda of Bhagavata. Then Kaka went to Baba and asked him, 'This is finished. Should I read this again or read any other pothi?' Baba said, 'Go on with the parayana of Eknath Brindavan pothi'. Amongst the numerous works of Eknath, none is named 'Brindavan Pothi'. So Kaka Saheb took Eknath's Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, and asked Baba whether that was Brindavan Pothi. Baba said 'Yes'. Kaka did not understand, and others also did not understand why Baba called Eknath Bhagavata 'Brindavan Pothi'. But when

Kaka came to the end of the book, he found the last stanza of the last, i.e., 31st, Chapter in which the author Eknath says.

Haa Ekaadasca navhe Jann

Eka tisaam Khanache Brindavama

Etha nitya base Sri Krishna

Swananda puma nijasatla

which means—'know this (book) is not Eleventh. It is the 31st storeyed Brindavan. Here Sri Krishna always resides, in his own essence, full of his own bliss'. Kaka and all wondered how thoroughly familiar Sai Baba was with Eknath Bhagavata by seeing that he referred to what was stated in its last stanza (in the 31st Chapter). When Dixit's daughter Vatsali died, that day a copy of Bhavartha Ramayan came to Dixit by post. He gave it into Baba's hands. Baba holding it up side down dipped his hand in it and took up the passage where Rama condoles Tara after Vali was slain and asked Dixit to read it. What is there that Baba did not know? When Bhagavata was over, Kaka Saheb asked Baba, if he should study Bhagavad Gita with commentaries. Baba ordered him to go on with concentrated study of only two works, Bhagavata and Bhavartha Ramayana. He had not merely to study but also do *Mananam* (meditation) and observe *Acharanam* (to have his conduct based on the scriptures). After the nine months were over, Baba stopped his severe practice of seclusion, and Dixit was permitted to go and visit Bombay also.

VAIRAGYA

Dixit's vairagya developed steadily along with his love of the Guru. His Guru both by example and precept showed him the absurdity of the worldly man's desire for much wealth and how little was necessary even to an ordinary sadhaka. Especially after Baba had assumed all his responsibilities, he noted how needless it was for him to spend attention and time or energy as before to acquire or preserve wealth. Two instances may be cited as typical of this teaching of Baba. In the early years of Kaka Saheb's contact with Baba, he earned large fees. On one occasion when he came to Shirdi, he came along with a trunkful of rupees (may be Rs. 1000), which he earned in a Native State. He

came to Baba, placed the trunk before him, showed him the rupees, and said, 'Baba, all this is yours'. Baba at once said, 'Is that so?' and plunged both his hands in the box full of rupees and gave away heaps of rupees to the people that crowded round him like bees for honey. In a few moments, the trunk became empty. This incident is narrated by Garde, a Sub Judge friend of H. S. Dixit, who was watching all the time the face of Dixit to study the reaction on his face to the rapid scattering of his hard earned money by Baba. Though any other person in his position would have felt the loss of money very bitter. Kaka Saheb was unmoved. That showed how he had hardened in his vairagya at the feet of Baba. He learnt again that the silver so highly valued by the world was but mud to the Sadguru, who was a "*Sama loshta asma Kaanchanah*" i.e. one to whom a clod, a stone and gold were equally indifferent. B.C. (6) 8, (14) 24

On another occasion, when Dixit got a cow, Baba said, 'This cow was formerly a Jalna man's, before that an Aurangabad man's, before that, Mahlsapathy's; God knows whose property it is'. Baba's statement was an exposition of the Isavasya Upanishad, which says,

havasyam Ida(g)m sarvam Yatkincha Jagalyaam jagat

Tena tyaktena bhunjithah Ma gridah, Kasya Sviri dhanam

which means, 'Whatever thing is in the world is covered by God. Renounce that and be happy, Covet not. Whose is property? or covet not any one's wealth, yours or others. Property is always changing hands and changing shapes. It is not perpetual. So it must be kept away (from the soul) to attain happiness.' Thus we have to regard all property as coming and going "*Agamaapayinah*" B G(2) 14 and should avoid getting attached to it. Baba's undertaking responsibilities for Dixit and family was so wide that Dixit felt himself always under Baba's care and had no need to fear. Baba's words to Khaparde, Dixit, and others were, 'Why fear when I am here?' Baba gave ample proof to Dixit of his thorough knowledge of all events, past, present and future, taking place here, there, and everywhere, and his power to see to the exact fulfillment of his promise or prediction.

By constantly staying with Baba, Dixit noticed that Baba had this Antarjnan" or *Chittasamvit* or *Ritambhara Prajna*, and that he had also vast

control over men, creatures, and inanimate things of Nature. For instance in 1917, Kaka Mahajani, who was at Bombay, was requested by the son of his master Thakersey Sail to go to Shirdi and take Baba's advice as to what would be the best course for his master's health. Mahajani said that as Dixit was at Shirdi, it would be sufficient to write to him. But the master's son said that Mahajani should actually go to Shirdi as nothing else would satisfy his father. When this conversation was going on at Bombay, Baba told Dixit at Shirdi, "What deliberations and consultations are going on there!" The next day when Mahajani turned up at Shirdi and mentioned about his master's health, Baba told Dixit. This is the matter we were talking about yesterday. Is it not?' Dixit compared notes with Mahajani and found that while Mahajani and his master's son were talking at Bombay, Sai at Shirdi was fully aware of that fact. On one occasion, immediately after Arati. Sai Baba told his devotees. (B.C.S. 406,) 'Be wherever you may, say whatever you may, and do whatever you may, be sure, I am aware of what you say or do'. This is *Ritambharaprajna*, which only perfectly realised souls like Sai have. Some others may through yogic practices, mantras, or by the use of spirits, acquire mind-reading, clairvoyance, and, within limits, may even be able to say what some persons at some places do or say. But ordinarily such yogis cannot always and without effort, be all-knowing at all places like Baba. Thus Dixit was convinced that Baba had these divine qualities (far superior to magical feats) and also the divine power to know or control the future and protect him.

A well-known story says that even the great Vyasa who codified the Vedas could not get definite knowledge of the future. When Dasa asked his Guru Vyasa when the former's death would take place, Vyasa did not know it, and therefore went with his pupil to Yama, who also did not know it. Vyasa then went with the other two to Mrutyu (Death). He also did not know, and all the four went to Kala's (TIME'S) place, and there at the place of Kala, the pupil died, and Kala's register showed the stanza.

*Yada Vyasaschcha Dasaha Yamena Mrityuna saha
Kaalasya griham Aayanti Tadaa daso marishyati*

which means:— "Dasa will die, when Dasa goes to Kala's place with Vyasa, Yama, and Mrutyu".

Let us now contrast this with Baba's knowledge of the future. On one occasion, Kaka at Shirdi got fever, and then when he went to Baba, Baba told him, 'You better get away to your bungalow at Ville Parle. This fever will last only "four" i.e. a few days. But have no fears. It will pass away, and you will get all right. Do not allow yourself to be bedridden. You can go on eating sira (semolina pudding), as usual'. Kaka Saheb accordingly went away to Ville Parle. There his fever was increasing. Dr. Demonte was called and he diagnosed the fever as Navajvara and he directed the patient to remain in bed and take the prescribed medicine. Baba had told him, '*Padighevum Nakos*' that is, 'Avoid lying in bed'. So, Kaka sat up on a swing (Palang) and he went on eating sira, a dish full of ghee and semolina, which fever patients are medically advised to avoid. The fever steadily increased, and the doctor was aghast at Kaka's throwing his instructions to the winds. He called on a fellow doctor to diagnose, and both of them said that things would take a very serious turn, if Kaka Saheb kept on violating medical advice. But Kaka told his doctor Demonte that he had sent for him to have friendly and cheerful company and that he was sure, as Baba said 'This fever would pass away in a few days' and that the doctor would not be blamed as he (Kaka) was sure to recover. Dr. Demonte thought that Kaka was being fooled by some fakir. But to his surprise and that of others, Kaka's health, though it went on from bad to worse, suddenly regained normality on the ninth day.

Thus Kaka Saheb was confirmed in his absolute belief in the divine protection of Sai Baba, and the absolute truth of every word that Baba uttered. This faith is called '*Nishta*', one of the two coins which Baba insisted on being given by the disciple as Dakshina to the Guru (namely, '*Nishta* and '*Saburi*'. *Saburi* means patience, courageous, cheerful and persevering).

These qualities were steadily developing in Dixit, and these two coins (Nishta and Saburi) he gave to Sai Baba, his Gurudeva. There were frequent occasions to revive and strengthen these qualities in Kaka. For instance, on one occasion,

Kaka went to Baba thinking he should present him a garland and Rs. 25. But he first presented only the garland. Then Baba said 'This garland calls for Rs. 25'. Kaka gladly noted Baba's Antaryamitva i.e. knowledge of all minds. On another occasion, he had gone on with his puja to Sai Baba in his quarters but he forgot to offer the usual betel and nut after naivedya. When later he went to Baba, Baba asked for the betel and nut. This convinced Dixit that Baba was watching him every moment of his life and his every act. Again Dixit was a perfect gentleman with excellent manners and a very good heart. Dixit would not scandalise any one. But on one occasion, it so happened that he joined in scandalising Lord Christ. A little while after, he went to Baba for massaging him. Baba was angry and said, 'Do not massage'. At once Dixit remembered that he had scandalised Lord Christ, and that Baba was therefore angry. He repented his mistake and resolved never to commit such mistakes again. Kaka had the immense advantage of what Roman Catholics call "practising the presence of God." They deal with an unseen God and take immense pains to realise his presence before them at every moment and few of them succeed in this herculean effort. In Kaka's case, the presence of the divine watching him and directing him every instant of his life was evident, too patent for him to ignore and the consequent elevation and freedom from fear and care, quite easy and natural for him. Whether he was talking ill of Christ or resolving to fast or whether he failed to offer betelnut to Baba at his private puja to Baba's photo, Baba was on the watch, and when Kaka went to Baba later, there was the appropriate rebuke or demand.

Once Kaka resolved to observe fasting for the night. But as Baba did not encourage unnecessary observances, he repeatedly told Dixit to take his night meal. So Dixit gave up his idea of fasting. This reminds us of St Mark II 18-21 wherein Jesus informed people that his disciples were not fasting as other devout people did, as the children of the bride chamber would not fast so long as the bridegroom was with them. As long as Jesus watched over his disciples and kept them pure, fasts and vigils were unnecessary. When Baba was there to keep Kaka free from lascivious thoughts and tamasic disposition, there was no need to

fast. Even after 1918 Kaka was feeling Baba to be the God within. He struggled against evil thoughts and tendency to idle gossip or acceptance of low levels of thought and action. He prayed within himself to Baba to correct him and guide him. Even if his thoughts strayed, he would pray Baba to forgive him and strengthen him in his avoidance of the same or similar falls.

Baba was watching not only over Kaka, but over all his relatives also. One day Kaka received a letter that his younger brother at Nagpur was ill. Then he said to Baba, 'I have received this letter and I am of no service to him.' Baba said, 'I am of service'. Kaka could not make out why Baba said so. But at that very moment, at Nagpur, a sadhu came to attend upon his brother, and cured him of his illness, and used the very words of Baba, namely, 'I am of service'. Kaka thus found that across 1,000 miles, Baba could see what went on and could carry out what was necessary for his sishya's relatives.

Dixit had such perfect reliance on Baba that before taking any step in any important matter, he would go to Baba and get his orders and follow the same to the very letter, even though the course was running counter to his own judgment and feelings or those of his friends and relations. Baba once tested and proved his implicit obedience while enjoying the fun of the test. B.C.S. 619 gives the account which shows that Bade Baba, Shama, and Ayi all shrank from assisting Baba or carrying out his order that a goat thoroughly weak and about to die should be slaughtered with a knife at the mosque—while Kaka Dixit alone stood the test and was bringing down a knife over the neck of the creature in implicit obedience to an apparently horrid command. B.C.S. 619 gives the account thus—

619. Once a goat entered the mosque, old, famished and just about to die.

Baba (to Bade Baba):—Cut that goat with one stroke. Bade Baba—(Looking at it with pity) How are we to kill this?

Ayi So saying, he went away from the mosque.

Baba:—Shama, you cut it. Fetch a knife, from Radhakrishna
(Ayi sent a knife; but learning the purpose, recalled it.)

Shama:—I will go home to fetch a knife.

Shama went home and stayed away there.

Then Baba to H.S.D.— 'You fetch a knife and kill it.'

H.S.D. went and fetched a knife.

H.S.D.—Baba, shall I kill it ?

Baba— Yes.

H.S.D. lifted up the knife and held it up in hesitation. Baba—What are you thinking of? Strike.

Dixit obeyed and was bringing the knife down.

Baba—Stop. Let the creature remain. I will kill it myself but not at the mosque.

Then Baba carried the creature a few yards, after which it fell dead.

Some might suppose that such intimate relation and dependence of the disciple might snap if the Guru left the body. But that was not so. After Baba left the body, Dixit, like several other staunch devotees, intently concentrated on Sai Baba, and after prayer cast chits before Baba, and asked some child to pick up a chit at random, and the directions of the chit were Baba's orders and were safe to follow always. One instance may be cited of Dixit's trust in consulting Baba through chits and its proving a reliable method and Baba's proving a reliable helper of himself and his relations. After Baba's samadhi Dixit tried to revive his practice especially for the sake of others. His brother Sadashiv Dixit, BA., LLB., tried to practise at Nagpur, etc., and failed to secure any practice or appointment. Dixit then consulted Baba through chits and acting on the chit-accrued order brought Sadashiv over to Bombay. But even at Bombay, Sadashiv failed to secure any success. Kaka wondered how Baba's order of advice should prove so useless. He was thinking of sending his brother away from Bombay, but as Deepawali festival came in, the brother was detained for that festival. Just at that time, leading persons from the Cutch Samsthan came to consult Kaka Dixit as to which person should be selected as a sufficiently reliable officer on a high pay of Rs. 1000. When Kaka suggested Sadasiva's name, that was readily accepted, and he became Dewan of that State. Baba springs his surprise at the last moment when he gives his blessing and justifies the fullest confidence reposed in him by Dixit, etc. Damodar Rasane employed a similar practice, and says in his

experiences (Vide Devotees' Experiences, Volume II) that Baba's answer on chits to him were always found to be correct (N. B.—Powerful faith alone can elicit a reply).

About Sai Baba's nature, H.S. Dixit entertained no doubt. He was "simply God; especially after he shed his body. He was God—whether in the flesh or out of it, i.e. in Samadhi" B.C.S. 49, 51, 52 62-89 58, & 149. (Baba heard and hears the prayers and troubles of all at all times and places and answered and answers their prayers. What is more, he deeply loved and loves his devotees as his own children and babies (BCS 42). Once pointing to a baby, Baba said, 'When this child sleeps, we have to be awake and guarding (B.C. & S. 34). Baba was and is always doing this for his devotees. Kaka Dixit ever felt that Baba was always behind him and supporting him B.C,S. 24-30, 32—42. His mind was thus freed from fear, anxiety or care, and could happily allow itself to concentrate on and lose itself in the lilas of Sri Krishna and Rama in Bhagavat and Ramayana or of Sai. He was fond of puja as also of parayana. His parayana consisted of Bhavartha Ramayana and Eknath Bhagavata. He was fond of Bhajan, especially Sai Bhajan, and was singing to himself 8 or 9 songs of Baba, especially at evening time, when he would be pacing up and down his terrace. He had a good knowledge of music, and could even compose songs. When he composed a song, Kaka Mahajani asked him to compose more songs. But Dixit's reply was that there were many classic songs and it would be absurd on his part, when these with their holy associations were available, to add his own songs of inferior merit. But the more important objection was according to Dixit that such composition would strengthen egotism in him, and make him feel 'I am a composer: I have done such and such a thing'. Such abhimana, he was killing out of himself, and his humility and simplicity were marked features in his character.

When he found that Baba was perfectly reliable in providing him with everything that was necessary for his temporal and spiritual welfare, he might ask what made Baba attract him (Kaka) to his feet in 1909, and thus undertake all responsibility for him. The obvious answer is, 'Rinanubandha'. We find in G.S.

Khaparde's diary written at Shirdi that (B.C & S. 502) Baba said to Khaparde, 'You, I, Kaka (H.S. Dixit), Shama, Bapu Saheb Jog, and Dada Kelkar, were living together with our Guru in a blind alley in our former birth, and I have, therefore, drawn all of you together in this birth'. Baba avowed in vary general terms (B.C.S. 56) that all the devotees who came to him were drawn by him to himself; and they were not voluntary visitors. When a boy ties one end of a string to a bird's foot and pulls it, the bird must come to him. So, these devotees must come to him. though they were not aware of either the fact of his pulling or the reasons for his pull. The reasons for approaching Sai Baba as for approaching God. so far as they were known to the devotees, were always worldly. Damia once objected (B.C. & S. 56) to devotees coming to Baba with worldly objects, and said they should be driven away. But Baba answered him that he should not say so. He said that he himself drew the devotees to him for one object or another, and after the devotees were satisfied, they stayed on with him. It is the *aarlha* (sufferer) who goes to God and not the man without troubles.

B Gita VII 16 ;—

Chaturvidhaa bhajante inaam Janas sukrutino Arjuna

Aartha jijnaasurarthaartha Jnaani Cha bharatarshabha

Krishna says:- 'Four classes of men come to Me, O Arjuna — those in distress, those who desire to know, those seeking wealth and the Jnanis or fully realised men'.

Persons who approach God or Gurudeva are mostly persons who have worldly troubles seeking worldly relief. It was the lameness of H.S.Dixit that made him think, at the suggestion of Chandorkar, of approaching Baba, He did not come with a view to get a Guru when first approaching Baba; but on account of Baba's wonderful powers and nature, and on account of Dixit's contact with a sadhu named Datta Maharaj in his earlier life, he noted at once that Baba was preeminently fitted to be a Samartha Sadguru for himself. Baba's wonderful powers over men. and things, and also wonderful love, operating to benefit thousands if not myriads of persons in all sorts of places and conditions greatly impressed Dixit. Baba was obviously, like Sivaji's Guru Ramdasv preeminently a

Samartha Sadguru, i.e., one to whom any one desirous of achieving both temporal and spiritual welfare should resort and stick, life after life. To most people however Baba did not appear to be a Guru at all and he seldom declared himself to be a Guru. But on one occasion he quaintly or silently admitted or avowed his Gurudom and its wonderful nature. It was once the lot of H. S. Dixit to elicit this avowal from Baba. It came in connection with a commonplace request for leave from Baba for Dixit and others to go to Bombay. When Baba said, 'You may go' (B.C. & S. 176), some one asked Baba, 'where to go?' Baba gave that a spiritual turn and said 'Up', meaning evidently "to Heaven or God". The question was asked 'What is the way?' Baba answered, "Many ways there are from many places." Baba added, "From this place (meaning Shirdi or Baba's Masjid) also there is a way. But the way is full of obstacles. There are tigers and bears on the way. If one is careless, there is a deep pit into which one may fall". Then Dixit asked Baba, 'if there is a guide?' Baba answered, 'In that case, there is no danger or difficulty. The bears and tigers will move aside'. This was a clear statement that persons wishing to reach the goal, viz., God, could do so even from Shirdi. Kabir's song "*Guruvina Kona balhave Vat*". If there is no Guru, who will show the way? If they have the help of a Guru (guide), they will have no difficulty, and they can safely reach their goal. Of course, the sishya must have *ntshta* (faith) and *saburi* (courage and perseverance). Unless he gets out of worldly attachment, lust, anger, etc., he can never be attached to his Guru or God; and, therefore, the complete, unconditional and perfect surrender of "*Tan, Man, Dhan*", i.e., mind, body, and possessions by the sishya, at the feet of the Guru is very necessary. Confidence in the Guru is a necessary prerequisite for getting the help of the Guru. Dixit offered his *Tan, Man, and Dhan*, at his Guru's feet with perfect confidence. He gave up practice. He gave up society, politics, social esteem, etc., which were dear to him in former days, and stuck to Shirdi to render service to Baba and the bhaktas, both before and after 1918 upto the very end of his life. One may ask, as many of Kaka's relatives asked, "What is to happen to the relatives and dependants of Kaka, if Kaka gets vairagya and stops earning?" A similar question was asked about Balakram Manker, who was the

chief earning member of his family, and who was suddenly attracted to Baba, and gave up his earning activity by staying with Baba or alone on Machendragad Hills under his directions. When the relatives asked Baba 'What is to become of Manker's sons if he ceases to earn?' Baba's answer was, 'I will provide for Manker's sons' (B.C.S. 31). Baba has really provided for them, for they are all occupying high and enviable financial positions now.

About Kaka Dixit. at the very outset, Baba had answered this question by saying, '*Kaka Tula Kaiji Kasli; Mala Sara Kaiji Ahe*', i.e.. 'Dixit. why should you have any care? All care is mine'. Baba, having said this, would be the last person to break his promise of bearing the entire responsibility for Kaka and his relatives. Several incidents would be mentioned to show that before the Mahasamadhi of Baba in 1918 and after, Baba did bear all that responsibility.

First we shall take Dixit's sons and narrate an incident or two. In 1913 Kaka Dixit's boy was reading at Bombay at Ville Parle, and Kaka was with Baba at Shirdi. Just a month or two before the examination, the boy had continuous fever. So Kaka's brother wrote to him to come up and look after the boy, but when the letter was shown to Baba, he told Kaka not to go, but, on the other hand to send for his son to Shirdi, where there was neither doctor nor medicine available. So, the boy's uncle sent him up to Shirdi unwillingly, and strange to say, without hospital, doctor, and medicine, the boy improved in health and got alright at Shirdi. Then the uncle wrote that the examination was on 2-11-1913, and the boy must be sent up for studies. But Baba did not allow it, not even for attending the examination on 2-11-1913, though the boy's uncle wrote that the boy should be sent up. Kaka asked for leave. But Baba did not allow him to start. It looked as though Baba was seriously injuring the boy's prospects. But what happened at Bombay? The examination to be held on 2-11-1913 had to be postponed to 6-11-1913 as a plague rat was found in the examination hall. Again for the 6th, the boy was requisitioned. Again Baba forbade the boy's departure. The boy did not go up. The explanation appeared soon. Again there was a plague rat in the examination hall, and the examination had to be postponed to the 13th. Baba

ordered the boy to be sent up for that date, and he attended the examination and passed. (B.C. &S. 375)

We have already seen how Baba looked after Kaka's daughter Vatsali when an almirah tumbled down upon her. How did the fall of the almirah, with the heavy articles inside, not hurt the girl? In B.C. & S. 35, Baba says, 'I will not allow my devotees to come to harm. I have to take thought for my devotees. I stretch out my hands, four, four hands, at a time to support them. There were some cases, however, in which Baba finds himself prevented from doing anything, and that is what happened finally in the case of Vatsali. When she was in Shirdi, she got fever and Dixit was simply trusting to Baba. But this time instead of saving her, when the fever had far advanced, Baba appeared to her in her dream, and said. 'Why should you be down here? Come and be lying under the margosa tree'. This was ominous, and the very next morning, Baba asked Shama, 'Is Kaka's girl dead?' Shama replied, 'O, Deva, why are you speaking so inauspiciously?' Then Baba replied, 'She will die in the afternoon'. She died accordingly at that time. To enable Dixit to bear the blow Baba gave him a prescription. Kaka took in his hands Bhavartha Ramayana and handed it over to Baba. Baba then dipped his hands into the book, and opening it, at the page in Kishkinda Kanda, where Rama kills Vali and consoles his widow, asked Kaka to read and digest the same. When death is inevitable, Baba wants his devotees to be strong-minded enough to recognise the fact of its inevitability^{10*} and bear the separation. Death is not always an evil. Baba conveyed this truth to Kaka at least on one other occasion. An old woman with her only son was at Shirdi, and a cobra bit that boy. The old woman ran to Baba, and asked for udhi to save the life of her son. Baba did not give any udhi. Then the woman went out. But soon she returned beating her breast wailing aloud that her son was dead. She implored Baba to revive her son. Baba gave neither udhi, nor other help, and

¹⁰ *Avascvtun Bhavi Bhatvanam Pratikaro Shaved yadi*

Tatha Dukkhir- na lipyeran Nala Rama Yudhishtirah

i.e. If the fated events could be escaped by efforts, then Nala, Rama and Yudhistira would not have been so much afflicted by sorrows.

said nothing. But Dixit was there. His sympathy was very much excited, and he requested Baba to help her, The woman's plight is heartrending. Please revive her dead son for my sake'. Baba replied, 'Bhav, do not get entangled in this. What has happened is for good. He has entered a new body. In that body, he will do specially good work which cannot be accomplished in this body, which is seen here. If I draw him back into this body, then the new body he has taken will die, and this body will live. I will do this for your sake. Have you considered the consequences? Have you any idea of the responsibility, and are you prepared to take it up?' H.S. Dixit desisted from pressing his request. The current idea of the worldly man that death is always evil is incorrect and the wise man is he who cares for life only as long as it lasts and meets death without fear when it comes (B.C.S. 314).

In the case mentioned in B.C.&S.362 (of which probably Dixit was aware), Baba mentioned to S. B. Mohile, who took his daughter to Baba for the cure of her split upper lip in 1913, 'I can cure her. But it will be of no use. The girl is of divine sort, and her life, consequently, will be very short, and she will die in March 1914'. That was just what happened. Similarly, Vatsali was also of divine sort. She was one whose *prarabdha* karma ended with her infancy, and, therefore, she would have a good end. The death from her point of view would be an advantage.

As for Dixit's own financial position, there was, for a long time, a period of depression, but there was no positive distress. Contentment was ingrained in Dixit, and he was always saying to himself.

Tevile Anante, Tase Rahave,

which is the same as

Alia Rakhega Vysa Rahena Mania Rakhega Vysa Rahena

This means, 'We must be content with the lot assigned to us by God'. So, he was generally contented and retained his mental peace in the midst of lack of funds and income. However, special occasions arose and his faith in Baba was tested and confirmed. Some time after Baba passed away, Kaka had to meet a heavy obligation of Rs. 30,000 to be paid to a Marwadi. The day for payment was

drawing near, and Kaka could not see how to get funds for meeting this large demand. One night, as he was sleeping, he had a dream, and in his dream, his creditor was pressing him for payment. In the dream, he assured the creditor, 'Oh, don't you fear. I have my friend Sir Chunnilal, Sir Chimanlal etc. all of them knights, and they will provide the money'. Suddenly, he woke up and remembering the dream, he bitterly repented his stupid folly in relying upon 'Sir' this and 'Sir' that who are just the persons who will fail to help at the crucial moment. He felt that the only person on whom he could rely for getting help was Baba, and cursed his folly in relying upon such useless human help. He resolved not to think of these 'Sirs' at all, and to rely confidently and boldly upon Sai Baba alone to furnish him with the funds and that too in time. His views are thus expressed in stanza 343 in Sai Natha Mananam:

*Nathe nah pitrushotlame trijagahtcim ekadhipe chetasaam
Sevye xwaxya paadasya darari vihow sayeexware tishtate
Yam kamchil purushaadhanmm laghubalam sarakhyam alpartadam
Sahyaarthum inrigayamahe naram aho mudha varakaa vayam.*

which means— "While there is our supporter Purushottama, i.e., the supreme person, that Lord of the three worlds, worthy of the soul's worship, the omnipotent Sayeeswara, we (i.e. I) turn to some weak and low person with the title "Sir" who gives little, for help! Alas what folly is this!"

He sat up in his office room on a chair and was waiting and waiting till the actual date of payment came. Till the last date and last moment, no money was forthcoming. But at the last moment, a young man, the son of a rich friend of his, came asking for his advice. He said that after his father's death, he was managing his property, and had to find an investment for his money. He said, just then he had brought with him Rs.30,000/- and wanted to know from Dixit what would be the best investment. Kaka, after explaining the pros and cons of other investments, finally told him that he himself was in urgent need of Rs. 30,000/- and he would be glad to have it on any reasonable terms, but that it was his duty to explain to the lender that his practice had gone down, that his income was very low, though his properties in the shape of bungalows were there, and that it

was his duty to point out the danger and disadvantage of lending to such a person. The young man, however, made up his mind to lend the money to him on account of his need and on account of his being his father's friend, and thus the creditor of Dixit was paid in time. But who could know that the sum of Rs. 30,000 was with a person with a mind to be influenced to lend it to Dixit? Baba alone could know. Baba alone could influence the possessor of the funds. It is just like this that at the crucial moment Baba acts often! For instance Baba operated on the minds of Brahmins to come to do *Pitru Sraddha* for Jog just at the nick of time (B C. S. 377-8). He influenced the appellate Magistrate's mind to deal summary justice to his convicted servant Raghu. He influenced the minds of Government members to refrain from granting sanction against Khaparde for prosecution (BCS 402-5). He influenced the minds of all and sundry to turn Upasani Maharaj back to Shirdi in June 1911 (BCS 635). It is this Baba who knows all facts and grips all minds who brought Kaka's friend's son in time with Rs. 30,000 to clear off Kaka's debt, and Kaka had many instances like this confirming him in his attitude of utter childlike reliance on his Guru even in financial matters.

But financial matters are not the most important. It is the ripening of the soul, the getting rid of past *vasanas*, the building up of strength and the perfecting of peace on the basis of perfect *nishta* and *saburi* that do matter; these are higher, far higher than mere finance. Baba undertook the responsibility for Dixit in these matters also. He expressly stated that he would take his Kaka in *Vimana*. What did that mean? Taking in a *vimana* is what occurs in puranas. When holy persons like Tukaram die, their souls go to Heaven in *Vimana*. So, Baba's words were understood to mean that Kaka would have excellent *Sadgati*. Kaka was assured of his future and also that his death would be happy and peaceful. Many pray for it thus-

Anaayaasena maranam vinaa dainyena jeevanam

Dehi me kripaya sayin raksha raksha maheswara

The prayer constantly on the lips of Dixit in the nine padas he repeated was for unshaken faith (*Achanchala bhakti*).

"My last prayer is: May my prema (loving devotion) at your feet increase! God, may my prema increase at your feet. Baba, may my prema at your feet increase!" According to the main mass of the followers of Bhakti marga, the goal or the highest point reached by the bhakta is perpetually staying at the feet of God with firm unwavering *achanchala bhakti*, and, if one is not able to reach permanent stay at the feet of God in this very life, he prays for perpetual contact (birth after birth) with his Guru Deva who would secure that goal for him. In the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 8, Verse 6, it is said

Yam yam vapi smaran bkaavam tyajati ante kalebaram

Tain tarn eva eti koimteya sada tad bhaava bhavitah

It is pointed out, 'Whatever a person thinks of at the time of his death, so becomes he in his next life.' So the advice given by Lord Krishna is —

Tasmaat sarveshu kaaleshu maam anusmara yudhya cha

Mayyarpita manobuddhih maam eva eshyast asamscayam

This means, 'Think of me always with mind and intellect surrendered to me. You will surely come to me'. So, many people try to think of God at the last moment of death. But it is by no means easy to persons, who have spent most of their time in worldly attachments, to think of God when life is parting. We shall describe fully later on how Dixit was able to think of Baba always and therefore at the time of death, the manner of which must be fully set out at the close of this chapter.

It may be noted that the chapter on H.S. Dixit might be of greater help to most readers than chapters on devotees like Upasani Maharaj, Kusa Bhav, etc. Dixit was a worldly solicitor or businessman and was not marked out for any extraordinary spiritual career like that of a Sadguru. What is important in Dixit's life is that from his ordinary level of a businessman, he made the very best use of his life after 45 years of it were over, and by the kindness of Baba, he was able to surrender himself more and more to his Sadguru and to attain, as a result thereof, perfect reliance on Baba's assurance that every responsibility of his would be borne by Baba, and the consequent fullness of peace and calmness. He could and did carry on his affairs, spiritual and temporal, with poorna *nishta* and *saburi* in his Master, being assured of getting the best out of his life, i.e., the

position for reaching the goal of life. This is all that most of our readers can aim at. They can see that Kaka had first a brilliant worldly life and an equally brilliant or even more brilliant success in the spiritual line, and that he died a happy death, 'being taken in a Vimana' by the Guru. Every one of us, though we are not face to face with Sai Baba as Dixit was between 1902 and 1918, can still have even now the same faith, the same surrender and the same assurance from Sadguru Sai that he will look after all our concerns and the consequent fearlessness and calm with the certainty of happy death like Kaka's. Sai Baba is not dead. He is God, and cannot die. When his body was lying in the Dwarakamayee, he appeared to and told Lakshman, 'Jog thinks I am dead; no, I am alive. Therefore do pooja and arati'. He has repeatedly said that his tomb, (i.e., He as *Apantaratma* or *ishtamurthi* or *Perfect Avalia*) will speak and move with those who make him their sole refuge. Baba said, 'I shall be active and vigorous from the tomb also. Even after my Mahasamadhi, I shall be with you, the moment you think of me at any place. As soon as a devotee calls unto me with love, I will appear. I require no train to travel' (BCS.47-52).

Some readers may think that H. S. Dixit had the advantage of constantly meeting and hearing Sai Baba and getting strengthened thereby which they, the readers, do not have. But, if one is earnest in his desire to concentrate on Sai, one can hear and move with Sai now, not through any extraordinary *chamatkars* (though these do take place even now - for typical instances see September 1953 and June 1955 'Sai Sudha'), but through very ordinary means available to all, such as getting the vast literature on Sai Baba in various languages, and having *sravana*, *manana*, *nidhidhyasana*, etc. of the same. One can get the same pooja, bhajan, harikatha, meditation or concentration on Sai as H. S. Dixit had. No doubt, Kaka Dixit had the opportunity and power to serve Sai Baba and his Sansthan for 14 years at great self-sacrifice, but similar service is open now to many of us, each according to his own opportunities and abilities. Sai Seva and Sai dhyana, the two main factors that built him up under Sai are still available to all of us. Dixit had the sadhana prescribed by Baba of nine months of solitude and seclusion (Vanaprastha Asrama) to concentrate effectively and exclusively

on Baba, Who prevents any of us from trying to get similar seclusion and concentration? Some may think that Sai Baba when he was in the flesh, undertaking all responsibilities, could afford Dixit better protection in all affairs than Sai could afford to give us now; but this view is wrong. Dixit from 1918 to 1926, when Baba was not in the flesh, was enjoying Baba's protection, see, for example, the provision of Rs. 30,000/- to meet his debts. It is only the fainthearted and ill-informed people that will doubt whether Baba will afford them protection now, and that from hour to hour. But if the readers were to take pains and read and zealously absorb the experiences of devotees after 1918, they will feel assured that Baba's protection is as sure today as it was before 1918. To doubt it will only mean lack of faith in Baba and in his utterances, (see B.C.& S. 51} where Baba says 'Even after Mahasamadhi, the moment you think of me, I will be with you at any place', and also lack of belief in such great personalities, like D.D.

Rasane, S.B.Dhumal, M.B.Rege, and so many others. There are many amongst us now who experience the benefits of the kind and constant attention of this guardian angel Sai in daily affairs, assuring us that we are His men (*Saduchya Ankita*), and that he bears our burdens as promised, of *Yoga kshemam Vahaamyaham*. It is only a question of faith. If faith is strong, the response is quick, and the feeling of enjoying His superhuman protection gets established and makes the mind peaceful and happy. Hence even the careful study of this one chapter on Dixit's life or any other chapter might enable several readers to lead their own life exactly on the lines of Dixit's life, developing their faith and their patience more and more every day. Their patience may be based on the principle of contentment emphasised by Dixit's Slogan: *Tevile Anante Taisech Rahave*.

This means that we should be content with the lot assigned to us by God. Faith is best and perfect when it recognises that Sai is God, and that Sai's

utterances are never wrong or false^{11*}. Such a faith can conquer mountains and that is what we should have. We should be strong minded enough to brush aside contemptuous remarks of people (ignorant though well meaning people who refer to our faith as blind faith). For instance, when Kaka Saheb lost his practice and when under the very nose of Baba his daughter died people could not appreciate his Sai bhakti. Even Anna Saheb Dabolkar thought first 'If Sai Baba could not save Dixit's daughter at Shirdi, what is the good of a Guru?' One might as well say, 'When my dear ones die, what is the good of God?' Faith is not a guarantee that there will be no death evil in the world, nor pains in life. But as in the above case, intense faith makes the devotee brace himself up against all inevitable calamities, and learn more and more of God's scheme for our life, that life is not intended to be a bed of roses and a treasure house of wealth or total avoidance of poverty. Faith enables the devotee to see what life is and what God's plan is, and improve one's own attitude to life. We are God's slaves and surrendered instruments. God (Guru-God) is doing the best for us in the circumstances, and we should never murmur, but maintain peace of mind. The numerous ways in

¹¹ or the innumerable instances of Dixit's finding that Baba's knowledge of distant events and foreknowledge of the future were perfect and unerring, we shall cite one more. H.S. Dixit was the sole living witness to a will he drew up and when that will came up for probate in the Bombay High Court, he had necessarily to be summoned. The summons was served at Shirdi and Dixit was legally bound to appear in Court at Bombay as witness and the party's agent came to Shirdi to take him. But Baba did not give him permission to start. This looked awkward—nay risky. But at Bombay the case was adjourned that day to another date. Even for the subsequent postings. Dixit was not allowed to start- Baba knew that the hearing would not take place. The citing party got vexed and was considering if the only remaining course was the issue of warrant to secure Dixit's presence should he adopted He wired to Dixit This time. Baba sent up Dixit and he was examined in Court. Baba knew exactly at what point he should stop detention. The risk which seemed imminent to others Baba knew and acted suitably.

which the soul and its faculties expand are outlined in Dixit's life and other devotees' lives. We should recommend our readers to start by perfect surrender and perfect faith in Baba's assurances to the surrendered. Dixit always felt that Baba, as assured by Him, was supporting him, was behind him always and was looking after all his concerns, and hence he avoided fear and anxiety. We recommend the same attitude to our readers. Who will surrender and believe? Who will surrender his *Tan, Man, Dhan*, i.e., body, soul and possessions, and believe in Baba's assurances of complete protection and also in Baba's perpetual presence, and his watching and guiding us and being ever ready to appear before us, if necessary? These assurances of Baba, our Gurudeva, are the same as the assurances given in Dwapara Yuga through the mouth of Lord Krishna—

Ananyaas chintayanto maam ye janaah paryupaasate

Teshaam nityaabhi yuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham

That is, 'if you completely surrender yourself and concentrate on Me and Me alone, if you are ever intent on Me, then I shall guard what you have and give what you require' (See B. C. & S. 20). Baba says, 'If one devotes his entire mind to Me and rests in Me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one sees Me and Me alone and listens to talk about Me and is devoted to Me alone, he will reach God (Chaitanya)'.

Reader, have you noticed that a classic work like Shakespeare's Hamlet or Kalidasa's Sakuntala, when read over and over again, reveals new meanings, and new beauties, say, "ven after the thirtieth reading? If you have developed faith, your reading of Baba's Gospel, Baba's life, Baba's acts and words would reveal to you new meanings, new applications, and new opportunities for you to serve Him and mould yourself. That perpetual freshness of Sai's love and His sayings is the test of the strength of your faith. Age does not wither Sai, nor custom stale His infinite variety. May Baba give you all full faith, and with it ample support for faith!

Once Baba told Kaka Saheb, 'If you talk ill or find fault with any one, that moment (immediately), I feel that pain'. Thereafter Dixit, who used to be short

tempered, conquered his temper, and became completely suave, humble, self-controlled, and agreeable. This illustrates how Baba builds us up and saves us. When Baba's life left his body in October 1918, that was a great blow to all his bhaktas. But there was further danger of confusion and conflict about the disposal of Sai's body. The proper disposal of the Sai body was essential for the carrying out of his mission, because Baba had said, 'Even from the tomb, I will be active'. Where was this tomb to be? Who was to build it? In whose charge was it to be? The almost universal belief of people (Hindus and Muslims alike), when Baba passed away was that Sai Baba, living in the Mosque, was a Muslim, and so the Muslims including Bade Baba gathered the body, and they wished to be in charge of his tomb. Baba was a famous Aivalia. His tomb would be visited by innumerable people, and miracles would be performed there. The offerings by the visiting pilgrims would be abundant. The tomb would be a very important place. Hence the Muslims thought and said that they should be in charge of the tomb. Unfortunately, they were few in numbers, and they had not the influence or the means to erect a suitable tomb for the Aivalia. The Hindus stressed the fact of custom (*mamul*) that the vast mass of people that worshipped Baba were Hindus, and, therefore, they were the proper persons to arrange for the tomb to be worshipped. The Kopergaon Mamlatdar arrived on the scene and asked each party to put forward its representation with largely signed mahazars. The Hindus were in larger number, and their mahazars also were numerous, the Muslim signatories to the Muslim Mahazar were very few. As for Baba's own wishes in the matter that was not well known. He never talked about it. But during his last illness he said 'Carry me to the Wada', (i.e. Buty wada). Buty was quite willing that his building should become the tomb of Baba. The Mamlatdar pointed out his difficulties. He said that if all parties agreed, he could give directions for the disposal of the body in accordance with the terms of the agreement. If they did not, he said, they should go to Ahamadnagar, and get the District Magistrate's decree, and he (Mamlatdar) would have to act upon that decree. Then Dixit was ready to go to Ahamadnagar. As he was a solicitor of high repute, the Muslims thought that if he went to Ahamadnagar, he would get the District Magistrate's

order in his own favour, and they would be nowhere. So, they came to an agreement with the Hindus that Baba's body should be in Buty wada, and, as usually the management of the tomb, etc., should also be with the Hindus, but Muslims should be allowed free access even though it was in a Hindu gentleman's house, and that Mamul should continue. So, the Mamlatdar himself passed an order, and Baba's body was buried without any difficulty at Buty wada, where it still remains. That was only a temporary settlement. The more important matter was as to the guidance of the future. That should be a scheme sanctioned by the District Court of Ahamadnagar. H.S. Dixit with his remarkable legal ability, his worldly wisdom, and great bhakti, drew up a Scheme and presented it with the signatures of number of influential devotees. That was sanctioned by the District Court in 1922 and that governs the Shirdi Sai Sansthan and Baba's tomb and other affairs. The property of the Sansthan vested in a body of trustees with managing committee of fifteen. Dixit contented himself with being the Honorary Secretary, and his able management pleased all parties. H.S. Dixit thus laid firm foundation for the success of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, and he must be given the credit for its present position. This may be ranked as one of his great services to Sai and to the public or to humanity.

Baba was looking after the spiritual welfare of Kaka Dixit in a way which is fairly understandable, whereas Baba's dealing with Upasani Maharaj was highly unintelligible and mysterious even to Maharaj. In the case of Dixit, there does not seem to be anything mysterious, though the inside mysterious working so characteristic of Baba must have benefited Dixit also. But Baba did not direct him to sit quiet and do nothing *uge tnuge* as Upasani was asked to. On the other hand, the method adopted in his case was just the usual methods adopted by all Gurus, viz., scriptural study, bhajan, puja and a general enforcement of faith in the Guru. No doubt the development of faith in Kaka by Baba was peculiarly good and strong by reason of (1) Baba's definite assurance that he undertook all responsibility for him, temporal and spiritual, and (2) by Baba's showing unmitigatedly that he was all-knowing and all-controlling even in respect of future events. Dixit's summons in the will case and nine days' fever were two excellent

illustrations to show how definitely Baba saw or controlled the future, and how firm and fully justified Dixit's faith was in Baba. There were hundreds more of such experiences of Dixit.

As for upadesa, Baba gave no upadesa mantra but every word, act, and omission of Baba was full of instruction and inspiration. For 10 years, i.e., 1909-1918, Dixit studied every word, every act, and every deed of Baba. This study itself was Satsang, apart from the personal contact which Dixit had with Baba.

*Santapasci sadaa jave tyanche javali baisave
upades te na deti tari aikavya tya goshti
techi upadesa hoti tyachi kashta nashta hoti
Vasudeva hmane santa sange kariti pasanta*

This means, 'Let us go to saints and stay by their side. If they do not give any upadesa, let us listen to whatever falls from their lips. Every such word is upadesa. By their force all our troubles vanish. Vasudeva (the author) says, 'Bliss comes from Satsang'. This was the experience of Kaka Dixit and of every devout person that went to Shirdi to see Baba.

Kaka Saheb treasured these utterances, deeds, etc., of Baba, and his notes of them have been compressed into articles in the Sai Lila Masik which Kaka Saheb started about 1923, and they are found under the headings '*Maharaj's Anubhav*', '*Bodha paddhati*' and '*Bol*'. Almost every serious devotee going to Shirdi contacted Kaka Saheb, and communicated his experiences to him. Kaka's services through starting Sai Lila Masik. and recording the experiences are undoubtedly great and valuable service to Sai and the Sai movement.

We may give a few points in the general improvement made by Kaka and the successive points in his life, that is, spiritual life and the goal of life. The most important item for any progress is the suppression and practical annihilation of all worldly desires (*sarva sankalpa sanyasa*). That is the first step. Love of the world (wife, wealth, etc.) prevents love of God. The more we forget and depress worldly love, the better our chances of increasing our love of God. That is just what took place in Kaka Saheb's case. His increasing attachment to Baba resulted in

increasing visits to Shirdi and in greater contact with Baba. That is one side of the shield. The other side of it was the decreasing contact with family, friends, political and social contacts, clients and cases. This resulted in the lowering of his income and loss of practice and prestige. If this produces sorrow or pain, the spiritual progress will be slow. But under Baba's care, decrease of income and decrease of contact with former friends led to an increase of *vairagya* and indifference. Dixit's *vairagya* was greatly strengthened by nine months' solitude (solitary confinement in his room) at Shirdi. Baba was proving an all round guardian angel, and Dixit's progress in moral and spiritual fields developed steadily. We shall note just a few points indicative of that progress.

When Bapu Saheb Jog, who acted as honorary pujari of Baba, asked Sai Baba, 'I have served you with sincerity and earnestness: in what form will I have the benefit thereof and when?' the answer was, 'Your perfection will be when you give up all worldly attachments, wear kupni (as sanyasi) like me, and beg your food (having nothing else to care for).' Such perfection did not come to Jog during Baba's life time. A few years thereafter, Jog became the pujari of Upasani Baba, took sanyas and died. His tomb is there at Sakori. As Kaka's services to Baba were quite as good as Jog's, nay far superior, Kaka hoped that he could become a sanyasi too. Even before that, seeing that there was a special set of people dining with Baba in the same *pankti* (row), Kaka hoped to be in the *pankti* to sit along with Baba like Fakir Baba (called also Bade Baba). Baba first gave only prasad to Kaka Saheb, but soon Kaka began to dine at Baba's Masjid, and finally Baba allowed him to sit along with him in the same *pankti* for meals. Baba also gave him a kupni to wear. Kupni is for fakirs and sanyasis. When G.G. Narke wished to have one, Baba declined to give the gift—as Narke was not to be a Sanyasi.

Kaka Saheb wore the kupni at Shirdi. but was not wearing it in his journeys or at Bombay. The dining along with the Guru is not merely an honour. It gives a special spiritual bent, and removes even the faintest traces of the feeling of (Brahmin) caste superiority or habitual aversion that feven Nana Chandorkar, etc. could not obliterate.

One is possibly reminded of other bhaktas who had also great bhakti and did great service to Baba, but who would never bring their minds to Kaka's level so as to forget the difference of caste and position, and remember only that Sai was God and accept his prasad and *Pankti Bhojan* as specially holy. One other bhakta seeing Ganga flowing from Baba's feet could not make up his mind to drink the holy Ganga water from Baba's feet but merely sprinkled the water on his head.

With Kaka Saheb (who had the benefit of being in England for some time) differences of Hindu and Muslim did not count. One instance of this may be cited here. After Baba's passing away, Bade Baba, or Fakir Baba, wished to live at Shirdi, but the houses being mostly Hindu houses, there was no one to rent a room to him. Strong was the prejudice to allow a Muslim into a Hindu house. Then Kaka determined that he should give and did give Fakir Baba accommodation in his wada in spite of the protests of the Hindu pilgrims. Even N. G. Chandorkar protested against the accommodation being given to Fakir Baba. Kaka brushed aside even that objection, and he gave Fakir Baba accommodation at his wada.

Dixit's samatva was of a very high order and was based upon the high principles, which he imbibed from Baba, that he should see God in all creatures and things. Readers would note how Chandorkar and Upasani Maharaj were taught this by Baba.

To Dixit's mind nothing was low or bad, and if there was any trouble in any creature or person, his sympathy was excited. He was known from very early days as a very liberal host inviting all people to his table and even at Shirdi at his wada, a mess was run and many people including Upasani Maharaj were fed free at Kaka's expense. At Ville Parle as at Lonavla, he would daily invite all persons, not merely friends but also fresh acquaintances to dine with him. His bungalow was described aptly as Annadana or Darmadana Hindu hotel; and this prevented many from starting a hotel business at Lonavla during Dixit's lifetime. But apart from human feeding, Kaka had his *atithis* (guests) in cats, dogs, ants, flies, etc. Readers may remember Baba's instruction to Chandorkar in regard to

Atithis, that *atithi* feeding is best done by taking some food and throwing it out where cattle, ants, dogs, etc., will come at their own time and eat the food. These are the real atithis.

Kaka Saheb at Ville Parle had a number of cats and dogs feeding with him, and his bungalow was always full of these cats and dogs. Even at Shirdi when he sat for his meal, cats would come, and he would offer them rice with ghee with the fullest feeling that God was inside them (*Isvaro Jivakalaya Pravishto Bhagavan Iti*). Readers would remember (1) how Nana was instructed by Baba that inside each body Nana should see and revere the soul within, which is but a part of the Universal soul, and (2) how Namdev ran to offer ghee to a dog that had picked up a slice of roti, i.e. dry flat bread, from his plate (thereby polluting the plate) and was running away. Kaka Saheb's sympathies were powerfully attracted to all creatures. This is a highly important step for expanding one's sympathies to all (*Sarva bhuta hite rafah*){E.G.5 (25), 12 (4)} thus overcoming *mamata* and *ahankar* (and without the conquest of these two, Siddhi or achievement of the goal, i.e. identification of self with Paramatma is an impossibility). Once indeed, he yielded to the common frailty of thinking that serpents were the cause of many human deaths and, therefore, at the sight of serpents, one must kill them (an advice found in books and pamphlets issued by Government). He asked Baba whether people should not kill serpents to save themselves from snake bite (and death) (See B. C. and S. 298). Baba's answer was, 'No, you should not kill it. The serpent will not kill us unless it is ordered by God; and if God so orders, we cannot escape it.' But this doubt was at Kaka's earliest stage. As days went on, his outlook changed completely. He would not kill snakes or scorpions, both of which infest Shirdi, even now.

On one occasion when Kaka and a number of others were together, a big black scorpion was approaching and some people brought a shoe to kill it. Kaka stopped them, and brought a long stick and placed it in front of the scorpion. The scorpion got on to the stick, and Kaka carried the scorpion and the stick outside, and left the scorpion at a safe place. He would not kill ants, bugs, and flies. As for bugs, there was an exuberant supply of bugs at Shirdi, especially at Kaka's

wada. Kaka himself was a very sound sleeper, and his sleep was never disturbed by bugs. Others were not equally hardy, or insensitive, and when Keating's Insecticide powder was brought by others to kill the bugs on Kaka's bed also, he stopped those friends, and said, 'Don't spread the powder. Human blood is the natural food provided for bugs. My sleep is not disturbed by them. At best they drink only half an ounce of blood, and my body can easily make up that loss. Is not God in bugs also?' he asked. His friends were stunned by his remarks. So, this habit of seeing God in all creatures was an excellent course for Kaka and thus he was able to think of God always. That is the advice given in the Gita and by Sai Baba also.

Sarvabutasthitam yo maam

Bhuteshu Bhuteshu vichitya dheerah

Tastnat Sarveshu Kaleshu Maam Anusmara.

But it is not merely the ordinary thinking of God that Kaka enjoyed. He kept up a special and very powerful contact with God by his bhajan and pujas. At bhajans his eyes would overflow with love, and he had not to depend upon others for bhajan. He could sing very nice bhajan songs, and he had a set of them always ready and sang them in his verandah next to his room at his wada. His modification of Das Ganu's original bhajan songs brought into full relief his powerful faith. Das Ganu's song runs thus —

(1) Kali jamaana mine gamaaya-

Sathiakharaka kiya na Koyi

(2) Sai Raham najara karana, etc

Mai andha hum bandha tumara

Mai naa janu Allah Ilahi

But Kaka sang these thus —

(1) Kali Jamana mine gamaaya

Sathi Akharaka Turn Our na Koyi

(2) Sai Raham najara Karana

Mai andha hum bandhatumara

Mujase Charan dikhalana,

The meaning of Das Ganu's original song is, 'I have gone down to the level of earth, and for the companion to lift me at death, I have none'. But that was not Dixit's mentality. From the outset, Baba had said, 'I will take my Kaka in vimana', i.e. at the moment of death, Baba will be with Kaka and see that he is taken to Him. So Baba promised to be his *Akarka Sathi*. No companion is better than Baba, the Guru-God. Dixit believed in Baba's undertaking, and the events proved Baba's forecast or promise to be true. Therefore, Kaka's words were, 'I have gone down to the level of the earth. For my last moments' companion or protector, there is none except you'. It is this positive and firm assurance that is helpful and necessary. The negative approach of Das Ganu's song is very chilling, unhealthy and undesirable. Kaka, like so many other bhaktas elsewhere, made this amendment as in other cases also. In the next stanza, Das Ganu says "I am blind and your slave. / *do not know God*," But Dixit substituted for the last five words there, "Show me (your) feet". How cheering, healthy and helpful these amendments are! They show Dixit's confidence in his Guru God Baba—as a God that helps.

The entire set of Kaka's experiences have not been published. It is appropriate in closing this account to note how Kaka's assurance of "*Sati Akaraka*", Helper at Death, was well founded. We shall see now his death happened.

KAKA'S DEATH AND SADGATI

In securing a good end to one's present life, Baba pays naturally due regard to the previous ideas of the bhakta, especially when they are based upon traditions or words of the scriptures. It is commonly believed that death on an Ekadasi Day carries a man to Heaven. Kaka Dixit had that belief, and he mentions it in his preface to Sai Sat Charitra, which preface was published in Sai Lila Masik over Dixit's signature in 1923. See page 4 of Sri Sai Lila Masik containing the earliest part of Sai Sat Charitra, Volume I No. I, where he says, 'It is fitting that the death of Hari bhaktas should be on Hari's own day, that is, Ekadasi'

(because Ekadasi should be devoted to Hari bhajan). Dixit notes that Baba gave this Ekadasi death to Kasiram, Appah Bhil and other bhaktas. We may also note here that Mahlsapathy died on an Ekadasi day as also Chandorkar. Taty Patei, etc. Therefore, it is most fitting that Dixit should die on an Ekadasi day according to the current belief of the virtues of death on that day. About Ekadasi, it should be remembered by all readers that it is considered a very special day for the purpose of intense concentration on God, and fasting is prescribed for that day in the verse,

Ekaadascyam ahorathram kartavyam bho jana dwayam

Raatrow jaaganam kuryat divaacha hart kinanam

with the study of and meditation upon holy works with bhajan. In the case of Kaka Dixit, all these were available; especially, the bhajan and the study were peculiarly suitable. He had excellent company in Anna Saheb Dabolkar, the author of Sai Sat Charitra, and Tendulkar, the composer (along with his wife) of innumerable songs on Sai Baba (found in the Sai Bhajanamala) both of whom were very deeply attached to Sai Baba and prized Dixit's company on that account. The portions which in his daily pothi Dixit had to study on 4-7-1926 were Gajendra Moksha, that is, the giving of Moksha to an Elephant by God, which is contained in Sundarakanda, 21st Adhyaya of Eknath Bhavartha Ramayana. This book was studied by Dixit every night, and on the night preceding his death (i.e. 4-7-26) he had a dream. In that dream he had a vision of Sai Baba and noticed that Baba came up and got into the upper cover of Anna Saheb, and Anna Saheb was holding Baba in a fast embrace with great love. This dream he communicated early morning after waking to Anna Saheb, Deshpande, Legate, and others. His parayana of Eknath Bhagavata also on that very day of his departure was of the portion which dealt with the Ashta Maha siddhis in Chapter XV of Ekadasa Skanda, especially verse 23, which says— *Parakaayam Vis can siddhah Aatmanam Tatra Bhaavayet, Pindam hitva Viscef pranaah Vaayu bhutah shadanghrivat*. This means, 'When a siddha wishes to enter into the body of another creature, he has only to mentally carry himself into the body of that other creature, giving up mentally his own body, carrying himself in an aerial body, just

as a bee leaves one flower and flies into another'. The commentary of Eknath's stanza is extremely brilliant and Kaka Saheb read that with overflowing heart and as described in that stanza, he himself like a bee flew from his body to some other body arranged for him by Baba's Grace at the time of death in accordance with Baba's promise.

On 5-7-1926. i.e. on Ekadasi, he was starting from Ville Parle to go to Dr. Deshmukh's Dispensary at Bombay to see his ailing son Ramakrishna. Anna Saheb Dabolkar had spent with him some time in excellent bhajan and pothi and was starting to go to his own station. When these (with Tendulkar) came up after the scheduled time to the platform, they found the train also was late and came just in time for them to catch it. Both of them and Anna Saheb Dabolkar got in, and the words which came from Kaka Saheb were, 'Anna Saheb, Just see! How merciful Baba is! He has given us this train this minute. He has not made us wait even a minute.' He then looked into his pocket time table and said, "Baba has made the train come late and enabled us to catch it. Or else we would have to be stranded at Colaba and be frustrated. So, this is Sai's grace". Thus, sitting facing Anna Saheb, Kaka Saheb remembered Baba's loving grace and appeared to fall asleep. Dabolkar first thought he was sleeping. When he went near him to hold his head and asked him, 'Are you sleeping?' there was no reply. Then Dabolkar feared that Kaka Saheb had fainted. Making Kaka lie down, Dabolkar noted the apparently hopeless condition of Kaka Saheb. The train was speeding from station to station. Anna Saheb told his friend Tendulkar in the carriage that he should tell the Guard so that they may carry down Kaka's body from the carriage. But as there was a big crowd and heavy rain, he could not do this at Bandra, and so only at Mahim he got down and told the Guard. The Guard arranged to phone to Parel for a stretcher and doctor, and at Parel, the body was taken out. The doctor examined the body and said that life was extinct. On account of the suddenness of death, there would have been difficulties of Inquest. But luckily they got the doctor's certificate, and the body was committed to the care of Anna Saheb. The main point for us to see is how Baba carried out his undertaking to carry Kaka in a vimana. Tukaram was carried to Heaven in a

Vimana, and that was a fine, blissful, and excellent end. But that was a miracle- Without any miracle, Baba had given Kaka a very high end.

There was no pain or fear before life departed from his body. His was a happy death even from the worldly standpoint. But from the spiritual viewpoint it was a highly blissful end. The death in such circumstances meant Sadgati (i.e. blessed future) to the Soul. According to the Gita, what a man thinks of at the time of his death, he becomes, in his next birth. Here Kaka was thinking of his Guru at the close of life as "That wonderful God that delayed the train for him." So, the mood of gratitude and love towards Sai was the mood in which he passed away. According to Bhagavad Gita (VIII), 14, 5, 7, "He who always thinks of Me, being deeply fixed on Me, finds Me at the time of death" and "thinking of Me only at death, reaches My state at death" i.e.. "comes to Me". So Dixit would go to his Gurudeva, and live along with him after his death. Be it noted that Baba's function was to provide Sadgati. Baba stated in B. C. & S. 91, "God has agents everywhere. They have vast powers. I have vast powers'. He has mentioned how he is exercising those powers. In B.C. & S. 90, he says 'Sit quiet, *Uge Muge*. I will do the needful. I will take you to the end.' In B.C. & S. 57, Baba refers to himself thus, 'This is a Brahmin, a white Brahmin, a pure Brahmin; this Brahmin will lead lakhs of people to the *scubra marga* and take them to the goal right up to the end'. In para 95 he says, 'I draw my devotee to me at the time of his death, even though he may die a thousand miles away from Shirdi.' In 96, he says. 'I will not allow my devotee to be lost. I will account to God for all those that have been given to me'. In 94, referring to Upasani's wife, who died in January 1912, Baba said, 'She (the deceased spirit) has come to me'. In 98 he says, 'I put the Rohilla Pishya and Rao Saheb Gal wanker each in his mother's womb'. He said of M.B. Rege's child that died, that it had come to his breast and would remain there eternally.

From the above we can infer that Baba carried his Kaka in a vimana as promised.

KAKA'S SERVICES TO SAI AND SANSTHAN

There were services rendered by Kaka Saheb with his peculiar position to Sai Sansthan and Sai better than any other devotee. There were many such services but two of them will suffice here.

Baba was getting an enormous income from voluntary dakshinas everyday.¹² There were people casting greedy eyes on Baba's income, such as the Madras Ramadasi group and also the police constables and others who had to keep watch over the miscellaneous crowds gathering round Baba amongst whom there were 32 K.D's at one time.

Generally Baba spent all his time and attention on his devotees. Baba says, 'My eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love me'. (B. C. & S. 59, 205-206. 306, 307, 473, etc.) So, Baba was not sleeping at all at night, but was lying down on a plank or on the floor and kept his eyes open, doing Namasmarana and trying to see which devotee required help. (B. C. & S. 293 gives a clear account of his plank vigil).

Having kept awake all night and dealing with all the comers throughout the day, he required some time to himself, and that was after his meal, namely, between 1 and 2 p.m. When at that time the curtain used to be dropped down at Dwarakamayee, no one would be allowed to go and disturb Baba in his rest. A rustic cooly, who did not know about this, went in after 1 p.m., bawled aloud, and.

¹² *Every evening, he disposed of the entire collection retaining nothing and saving nothing. Of these some were given fixed amounts i.e., regular daily payments e.g. to Bade Baba of Rs 30/-, to Talya Patel Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 to Lakshmi. the supplier of daily bread, Rs 4, etc. So the average income was calculated by some authorities. and was estimated to be above a Governor's income. This made Justice Chandavarker write an article in the Times of India', when Baba left his body, that Baba had wasted his Governor's income whereas he could have built ships and thus enriched the country. The Government tried to levy income tax on Baba, but Baba had no property to attach, and so, income tax was levied only on Bade Baba, Talya Patel, etc.

disturbed Baba's rest. He had been sent to fetch Syamakarna, a horse, gifted to Sai and having brought it to Shirdi, he went for his hire to Radhakrishna Ayi and Shama, who said that they had no money, and that he should ask Baba for it. So he went up to Dwarakamayee and shouted, 'Baba, Baba, give me my cooly hire.' Baba, his rest having been disturbed, was in a furious mood, and he flung a brickbat at him, which caught him on the head and drew blood. He went out crying and complained that Baba had caused him grievous injury, and what with the police and other people hovering about, there seemed to be imminent peril of a police complaint being launched against Baba. Usually if the person charged be a rich person, large sums are extracted from him. That seemed to be the likely result in this case. Luckily H. S. Dixit was there at the time, and, scenting the danger he sent for the injured rustic, and showed him how improper it was for him to disturb Baba at his rest for the sake of cooly wages for bringing the horse. H. S. Dixit, who was always just, generous and worldlywise, told the man that instead of wages, Baba would provide him with a profession, that is, he would immediately be paid Rs. 200, with which he could purchase a cart and bulls which he could use for transporting bhaktas to and fro between Shirdi and the Railway Station and thus serve not merely the bhakta public and Sai, but also his own interest; for he would be daily getting his bread and more than that, he would have an assured income thereby, instead of working merely as a cooly, which yielded a precarious income. That man accepted the Rs.200, and there was no case. He got his cart and bulls and was plying his trade of cart driving between Shirdi and Kopergaon railway station thenceforward. This is one instance wherein Dixit's Guru bhakti combined with worldly wisdom enabled him to render remarkable service to Sai, to the injured man, and to all. The second service has been mentioned already i.e., what Kaka did to attract people, prevent disputes and settle a scheme for the Sai Samsthan to look after Sai Samadhi, etc.

With reference to the religious goal, i.e. reaching God, mentioned already perhaps it is better to close this chapter with a few more observations to clear

doubts that may arise in the minds of readers sharply aware of philosophical and conventional differences amongst Hindus of Dvaitism, etc., as to technique.

Dixit was directed by Baba to concentrate his energies on the Path of Devotion, the bhakti marga and, therefore, on the Personal God especially as portrayed in the Bhagavata and Ramayana. In the Bhagavad Gita, however, the Impersonal is more prominent and frequently overshadows the Personal, and in some bhashyas, drowns it. Perhaps in the Bhagavata, Skanda XI, also there is a fair addition of the Impersonal to the Personal. The stress, however, in the Bhagavata and Ramayana is on the Personal. There is a difference in the constitution and stage at which a devotee of Baba has arrived. That decides for him whether the Impersonal or the Personal or both should be the subject of his attention, and Baba, as the Antaryami, the inner witness of the hearts of all, knows the exact state and stage of each. He, therefore, knew that Kaka was fitted only for the worship of the Personal God and asked him specifically to confine himself to two works, namely, (1) Eknath Bhagavata and (2) Eknath Bhavarta Ramayana. Even though Dixit took a copy of the Gita with commentaries thereon to Baba and asked him whether he was to study it, Baba's reply was 'No' and that he must continue his concentration on the above two works only. It does not imply that Baba condemns the worship or attainment of the Impersonal or a study of the Gita with commentaries or Bhashya such as N.G.C. had. Baba allows that worship at the proper time and to the proper person at the proper stage. The main thing for us is to concentrate our efforts on religion so as to produce the best possible results. For a lawyer accustomed to hair-breadth distinctions, it will be rather a dangerous waste of energy to start religion with an analysis of the psychology of human self and the philosophy of God, Personal and Impersonal. Though these subjects can never be excluded from entering into one's religious field, they have at first to be kept in the background with a dim perception that a solution of these is arriving in good time by the grace of the Guru who guides one in the Bhakti marga. The Guru will see to it that one's procedure and the result thereof are satisfactory without one's having to solve at the outset these hard conundrums about Personality and Impersonality of the

individual self and the Supreme Self, their identity or difference, and the exact end of all Metaphysics.

We may note incidentally that the difference between dvaitins and advaitins as to the end of life is more apparent than real. Dvaitins deal with a Personal God right up to the end and, therefore, they picture the ultimate goal of the individual soul as resting at the feet of the Personal God for ever and ever. But from ancient times the Personal and the Impersonal are recognised by the seers (Rishis) to be merely two aspects of one and the same Supreme. The dvaitins also find this doctrine as put forward in the Kena and other upanishads and in Bhagavad Gita. Chapter XII. Sri Krishna there points out in the Gita that He has an *Avyakta* aspect—Unmanifest—and that is beyond the reach of the speech and mind and hardly distinguishable from the Impersonal. But as power is conceived to be inherent in the Supreme, that same Supreme might be *Avyakta* or imperceptible or Impersonal at one time or in one aspect especially at the beginning and perceptible and Personal at other times and in other aspects, especially at present. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to all Hindus to realise God fully (*Samagram*) as both Impersonal and Personal with both *para and apara prakriti*, and this is in accordance with our real nature. Experiences of those who have concentrated on God without any narrow prejudices have shown them that while dwelling in their hearts upon the Supreme blissful person called Narayana, etc., the ultimate residuum is bliss with the absence of any personal factors. Neither the worshipper nor the worshipped is present there. The bare feeling of bliss alone remains. That does not, however, in practice continue for a long time. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, (Ch. XII) those who try to rest themselves on the *Avyakta* come back to the Personal and dwell upon that as being more akin to the normal state in each individual in which he conceives of himself as a personality practically identified with the organism which puts forward the notion of personality. In the Impersonal, there is no question of foot or our remaining at the foot of the Supreme except in a very vague and metaphorical sense. When this is reached, dvaitism and advaitism do not make any difference in the result of contemplation or concentration. In the case of Sai

Baba, he almost invariably referred to Allah, Hari, etc., but occasionally referred to the widest aspects of the Supreme, namely, being in all creatures and all places without form and being all. That is the same as Brahman which is mostly considered as Impersonal in the Upanishads (Kena, etc.). Especially for a devotee of Baba (as this chapter on Dixit's spiritual progress shows) it is perfectly needless to stress the difference between dvaitism and advaitism. Dvaitins and Advaitins alike can safely follow the lead of Sai Baba and begin with the Personal as invariably everyone must. Then, ultimately, they will see for themselves whether at the end there is any difference between the Personal and the Impersonal. Dixit, whatever his ancestors and his sect might lean to, had no predetermination or preference to the Dvaita or Advaita group and trusted to the safe guidance of the Samartha Sadguru Sai Baba and began his religious course properly. To reach Personal God, it takes many janmas (BG (VI) 48) *Aneka Janma samsiddhah* (VII)-19 (*Baluintim Janmanam ante jnanaran maam prapadyale, Vaasudevah sarvam itii* and then he sees God is All. The All is evidently Infinite and Impersonal while Vaasudeva is Personal. Till that stage is reached, the religious aspirant is wisely content to deal with God as a separate personality and in acting under the guidance of an All-knowing Guru like Sai Baba he is perfectly safe, for mostly the pupil in his burning love to the personal Guru identifies God with him. Tyagaraja of musical fame similarly left the question of preference between Dvaita and Advaita to God himself — "*Dvaitamu sukhama.*"

Baba disapproved of his devotees launching upon purely metaphysical disquisitions, i.e. all intellectual feats not required for their present course. By trusting to his guidance, the devotee's progress is assured and he will understand after making some progress, how the above and other problems are solved — especially by noting how Sri Krishna taught in Gita, e.g.,

Brahmanohi pratishta Aham Amritasya Avyayasya cha

Scaascvatasya cha dharmasya Sukhasya Aikantikasya cha

which means "I (your personal God) am the basis of Brahman (the Impersonal God described in the Upanishads), of freedom from Death and Decay, of Eternal Dharma and unalloyed Bliss (BG, XIV 27).

Dixit's life shows us that Baba with his wonderful powers and kindness prepares the pupil, and gives him the full development needed for his stage and takes him step by step — one step at a time — to reach the "far off divine event to which the whole creation (i.e., each creature) moves".

CHAPTER V

Anna Saheb Dabolkar (Hemadpant)

The mantle of H. S. Dixit fell on Govind Raghunath Dabolkar called Anna Saheb Dabolkar who proved a good Elisha following in the footsteps of the Elija Dixit. The two were very well acquainted with each other though occupying widely different positions in the world. Dixit was a well read B.A.,LL.B. a solicitor with a great reputation and vigorously carrying on his activities in political, legislative, legal, municipal and social affairs, having an All India fame. Dabolkar was only a humble Government servant devoid of any of those activities and unequipped with the high education and studies and contacts of the former. Anyhow the two got into contact and along with the famous novelist H. N. Apte compared notes and found they had common tastes and uncommon ambition specially in the spiritual field. They agreed that a Samartha Sadguru like Ramdas of Sivaji was decidedly the best person to resort to, if one could be found. They were all feeling that no such person had yet appeared in their horizon. They agreed between themselves that if it was the lot of anyone of them to light on a such a blazing light, he should straightway inform the other two and enable them to share the discovered treasure. Dixit was the first one to find the treasure, in the person of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi in 1909. He at once communicated it to the others. He wrote from Shirdi to Anna Saheb Dabolkar about Sai's greatness and insisted on his visiting Baba.

Dabolkar was somewhat impressed. But he could not definitely make up his mind. A self-made man who studied only upto the fifth standard and passed

his public service examination, obtaining the post of a Village talati and rising from that humble position to the posts of mamlatdar and first class magistrate by sheer ability.—he was also a good student of works like Eknath Bhagavat, Sankara's Viveka Chudamani and he felt that self reliance was the first and foremost virtue in his nature. Contact with numerous Prarthana Samajists also weakens belief in or at least reliance on saints and sadhus. So he was being pressed by his doubts about the good of a guru. When Easter vacation came in 1910, he almost made up his mind and did actually prepare himself for a trip to Shirdi. But the day on which he came to that decision, he learnt that a friend of his lost his son and lost him even though that friend's guru was by his side. "If a guru could not save the boy from death what is the good of a Guru?" was the powerful thought swaying him and he gave up his Shirdi trip. Later on Chandorkar pressed him to go to Sai and then he started (and by the lucky or foreordained intervention of a Mahomadan friend was prevented from missing his train). At last he went to Shirdi where Dixit met him and the rest of his story is narrated below.

Here it is enough to point out that Dixit had a great pan in drawing Dabolkar to Baba. Baba told him, 'Kaka is a good man. Go on listening to him'. Baba made him stick to Dixit who was in many ways better fitted to benefit by contact with Baba than he. His faith and fervour grew by Dixit's contact. Even at the last moment of Dixit, Dabolkar was by his side and had to attend to the disposal of Dixit's body after noting how he was "taken in a Virnana" by Baba. Till then both were working at the Sai Lila Masik for the spread of Sai faith and both were in the Samsthan Committee managing its affairs. When Dixit passed away, Dabolkar was fully prepared to carry on Dixit's work as Honorary Secretary of the Samsthan and a vigorous propagandist and the Sai Lila Editor. In every way Dixit's mantle fell on him and he was a worthy successor and so the chapter after Dixit must deal with Dabolkar. His single monumental work 'Sai Satcharitra' alone entitles him to rank as the next among Sai's apostles.

After Das Ganu, the author of many essays or chapters on Sai Baba in his three big books called Arvachina Mala, Santakatamrita and Bhakti Lilamritha

naturally one must come to the person whose work bulks very largely in the minds of Maharashtra bhaktas of Sai Baba, and that is Hemad Pant (i.e. Annasaheb Dabolkar). His work 'Sai Satcharitra' in Marati Ovi verse extends to a thousand pages and is treated as Sai Ramayana or modern Guru Charitra with the respect due to ancient puranas by the Maharashtra Sai bhaktas, and even by others who get access to it through N.V. Gunjaji's English adaptation of it or translations in Telugu etc. This work is highly meritorious and has been the instrument for many people becoming Sai bhaktas. The verses are highly sonorous and the stories about Sai Baba collected from various individuals consisting of actual experiences of numerous bhaktas, have great charm and are always fresh. This work has a very interesting history. But let us first deal with the author.

The author was a Government servant till the year 1936, his grade being that of a resident magistrate. Before retiring in 1916, he was lucky enough to have contact with Baba. Both H.S.Dixit and Nana Saheb Chandorkar were friends of his. Both were pressing him to go up to see Sai Baba. He did not (as stated already) at first feel sufficient enthusiasm about seeing Sai Baba and his mind was wavering. To go or not to go, that was his question. He was rather attracted to general theories, and it was the Grace of Sai Baba that turned him into such an able author to design a practical work so full of inspiration. When after all he started in 1910 to go and see Sai Baba, he made up his mind to go by the wrong train. Suddenly a Mohamadan acquaintance of his asked him where he was going. He said he was going to Dadar to catch the Manmad Mail to go to Kopergaon for Shirdi. That gentleman at once corrected him saying that Manmad Mail did not stop at Dadar. He also said, 'you had better go straight to Victoria Terminus and there catch it, for there will be sufficient time for you to get a ticket'. He adopted that advice. If that gentleman had not met him, he would have got disappointed and probably returned home, and his mind would have been tossing again in doubt whether to see Sai Baba or not. So, he himself says, 'Baba's hand has been visible in moulding my fate ever from the beginning'. Then when he first went to Shirdi, he was so very superficial in his attachment to Baba

that he fell to a 30 minute discussion with Bala Saheb Bhate, an old friend of his, on the question whether a Guru was necessary or not. Dabolkar was hotly holding the position that a Guru was unnecessary, and that it was a question of free will of everyone to go whichever way he liked. But Bhate contested his views on both points. Bhate said that there was no free will at all, and that the only thing was destiny. On the question of the need for a Guru, he said, 'A Guru is absolutely essential'. Naturally after 30 minutes' talk they completely disagreed with each other, and there was no result from the discussion except Dabolkar's mind being restless. After that, they went to the mosque, and when they prostrated before Baba, Baba pointed to Dabolkar and said, 'What talk was going on there at the wada? And what did this Hemad Pant say (pointing his chin to Dabolkar)?' Dabolkar's name was not Hemad Pant at all. Hemad Pant was a great genius, who in the mediaeval age wrote grand works and so, in one way it was a compliment and in the other, the reference to Hemad Pant was to mere literary skill. Anyhow Dabolkar was impressed by the fact that Baba without being told of anything, knew that there was a discussion, and that he (Dabolkar) had engaged in it with all his literary ability and dialectical skill. However, Baba's influence did not stop with that.

Dabolkar had very poor ideas on the subject of saints. For one thing, even frivolous objections to saints weighed largely in his mind. It was well known that Baba's favoured devotee, H. S. Dixit, called Kaka Dixit, was at Shirdi with his daughter, whose life Baba had saved miraculously at Ville Parle when a whole almirah full of toys was about to fall on her. On that occasion Baba said to Dixit (who was with Baba at Shirdi when the child was in danger at Ville Parle) '*Arre Kaka. Tula Kaiji Kazli Maje Sarakarji Ahe*'. That is, 'Dixit, why should you have any anxiety? All cares are mine'. On that occasion, when a whole almirah full of toys fell on the child, she was unscathed. She got only a scratch on her arm due to her bangle being broken. Yet that child, when at Shirdi, directly under the nose of Baba, died, Baba could not save her. Then Dabolkar thought if a Guru cannot save the child of his own pet devotee, what is the good of a Guru?' This appeared to him at that time to be a sound argument, but he adds that destiny

proved too much for that argument, and his destiny was to compel him to become a Sai bhakta and get along whatever happened to his arguments about pupils and the nature of help rendered by Gurus to pupils or Sishyas. By constant association with devotees, he got wider and more correct ideas as to the functions of the Gurus. He gradually resigned himself more and more to be dealt with by Baba. Baba dealt with him in a very remarkable way, and from the very beginning, made up his mind as to what should become of this Dabolkar.

Dabolkar had been gathering information about the lilas of Baba and, being a very able writer with great command of Mahratti verse and prose, with a good grounding in religious literature, wished to write out a complete study of Baba's lilas, thus forming a good chronicle of Baba. This would be on the lines of Saraswati Gangadhar's *Guru Charitra*, and would give peace and happiness to people afflicted with sorrows and heavily laden with miseries of worldly existence. This would also give them Jnana or knowledge and wisdom on temporal and spiritual matters. The lilas would be both instructive and interesting like the Vedas, and, if meditated upon, they would bring about laya or union with Brahman and mastery of Yoga and Yoga Ananda. So, he made up his mind that he should collect these stories and treat the publication as his own *upasana* of his Guru. It would be specially valuable to those who could have no chance of seeing Baba and who would therefore get an idea of Baba through his collection. Baba's teachings and expressions were the outcome of his boundless and natural self-realisation and Baba himself (so Dabolkar thought), put this idea into his mind to collect and render them as Baba's life or chronicles. Then, he wanted permission for the work. So, Madhav Rao Desphande (known as Shama) was requested to tell Baba, and he told Baba thus: This Anna Saheb wishes to write your life. Don't say that you are a poor begging fakir, and there is no necessity to write your life. But if you agree and help him, he will write or rather your feet (or Grace) will accomplish this work. Without your consent and blessing, nothing can be done successfully'. Baba was moved and blessed Anna Saheb Dabolkar by giving him udhi and placed his Asirvada hand upon Dabolkar's head, and said, "Let him make a collection of stories and experiences, keeping notes and

memos. I will help him. He is only an outward instrument. I should write myself my life, and satisfy the wishes of my devotees. He should get rid of his ego. Place (or surrender) it at my feet. He who acts like this in life, him I will help most. What of my life's stories? I serve him in his house in all possible ways. When his ego is completely annihilated, and there is no trace left of it, I myself shall enter into him and shall myself write my life. Hearing my stories and teachings will create faith in devotees' hearts, and they will easily get self-realization and bliss. But let there be no insistence on establishing one's own view, and no attempt to refute others, opinions of any sort".

So spoke Baba. Then Dabolkar made the promise that he would be in that mood and would surrender. His close intimacy with Dixit, Chandorkar and other devotees enabled him to collect plenty of material. This permission was given in 1916, and when Baba passed away, Dabolkar had hardly written two or three chapters. Most of the work was written after 1918. He wrote 51 or 52 chapters and passed away in 1929. Meanwhile his chapters were published in the Sai Lila Masik which was started under his and Dixit's supervision. Gradually people began to read his work and were highly influenced thereby. The effect of the writing was even more on the author himself than on the readers. One effect of it was to completely change his outlook. When earlier he was introduced to Baba, Chinchinikar told Baba that Dabolkar had a big family and that Baba should bless him to get fresh employment after retirement to maintain his family. Baba said, This cursed Government service he will get. But let him look to my service. That is most important'. And as Baba stated, Dabolkar got again employed, though only for a short time, but the employment in Baba's service was permanent and grew in intensity from month to month and year to year. His thoughts were upon Baba and his lilas, and the effect was that he was Sai-minded, and Sai-possessed. His life and outlook were greatly altered. He felt he was under the protection of Baba and he says, The moment I touched Sai Baba's feet, I began a new lease of life. I felt myself much obliged to those who took me to Baba, and I consider them my real relatives. I cannot repay their debt. I make mental namaskar to them. A peculiarity of Sai Baba's darsan, as I find it, is that by his

darsan, our thoughts are changed, the force of previous action (karma) is abated, and gradually non-attachment or dispassion towards worldly objects grows up. It is by the merit of actions in many past births that such a darsan is got. And if only you see Sai Baba, really all the world assumes the form of Sai Baba'.

That Anna Saheb Dabolkar's thoughts were changed thoroughly, may be more amply set out in what followed. First when he went to Baba, he had just a bit of devotion to Baba, and his main nature was still egotistic, combative, and was largely concerned with worldly ambitions. From 1910-16, his progress was hardly noticeable. But in 1917, a change came and he himself sets it out in chapters XVIII and XIX of his book, and therefore, we shall now proceed to refer to them. When he was shampooing Baba's legs, one Mr. Sathe had a problem and that was mentioned to Baba. Sathe was directed by Baba to read Guru Charitra. and he did so for seven days. At the close of it, Baba appeared in a vision (dream) to him with Guru Charitra in his hand. Kaka Dixit came and asked Baba whether he would explain to Sathe what the appearance meant. He asked 'Is he to go on with a second saptaha or study of the Guru Charitra?' Baba said, 'Yes'. Baba also said, 'If the work be studied carefully, the devotee will become pure and will be benefited. The Lord will be pleased and will rescue him from samsara.'. Hearing these words, Anna Dabolkar (or Hemad Pant) thought, 'For the last seven years (1910-17), I have been serving Baba and never got a vision, and this man, (Mr. Sathe) after a week's stay at Shirdi gets his vision. Like a chataka bird, I am waiting for Baba to pour his nectar on to me and bless me with his instructions'. This was his thought. Baba read his thought at once and told him, 'Go to Shama. Get from him Rs. 15 dakshina, stay and chat with him for a while, and then come back'. Accordingly, he went to Shama and asked for Rs. 15 dakshina: Shama was a very poor man and said, 'I send my 15 namaskars'. Then Hemad Pant said, "I am asked to chat with you and listen to you", Shama then began to tell him the stories of Baba's lilas, and the foremost amongst them that he mentioned was about Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukin.

Shama said, There was a lady, an old woman, who came to Baba and who was resolved to get *mantropadesha* from Baba. Baba did not give it. She wanted

to try satyagraha. She actually began to fast saying that she would fast unto death at Shirdi unless Baba gave her upadesha. After three days of the fast, I interceded on her behalf, and requested Baba to take pity upon her and give her something. So, Baba sent for her, and told her this. "Mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and meeting death. You are my mother and I am your child. Pity me. I will tell you my story. If you listen to it, it will do you good. I had a Guru. He was a very great saint and most merciful. I served him very long indeed. Still he did not whisper any mantra into my ear. I was anxious never to leave him but to stay with him and serve him and receive some instruction from him. But he had his own method. He just got my head shaved and asked me for two pice as dakshina. I gave the same at once. If you ask 'how a perfect Guru could ask for dakshina. and yet be called desireless,' I explain to you that what he asked for was not coins. The first pice that he asked for was *Nishta* or firm faith and the second pice he wanted was *Saburi* or patience or perseverance. These two I gave him, and he was pleased. I served my Guru for 12 years. He brought me up. There was no lack of food or clothing. He was full of love. He was Love Incarnate. His love was indescribable. He loved me keenly. Rare is such a Guru. When I looked at him, I was filled with bliss, and he was in bliss. Night and day I gazed at him without thinking of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other subject to meditate on. I had nothing but the Guru to attend to He was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. That 'fixture' is the first pice - *nishta*. The second pice, *saburi*, is my waiting patiently and very long on my Guru and serving him. This *saburi* will take you across samsara. Saburi is manliness in man. It removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways, removes all fear and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is a mine of virtues and is the consort of good thought. Nishta and Saburi go together. My Guru never expected anything else from me. But he never neglected me. He always protected me. I lived with him and sometimes away from him. Still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected me by his glance as a tortoise feeds its young ones. Oh, mother, my Guru never taught me any mantra. How can I give you any? Do not try to get mantra or

upadesha from anybody. Make me the sole object of your thought and actions, and you will undoubtedly attain Paramartha, the spiritual goal of life. Look at me wholeheartedly, and I shall also do the same, that is, look at you wholeheartedly. Sitting in this Masjid, I speak the truth and nothing but the truth. No sadhanas and no proficiency in sastras is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that the Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara, and Brahma, Trimurti Incarnate'. Shama said, 'The lady then accepted the advice'.

After hearing Shama, Anna Saheb went to the Masjid, and there he sat next to Baba, and when the Arti was going on, Baba asked him whether he went to Shama and asked for dakshina and had a chat. Dabolkar said, 'Shama sent his 15 namaskars. In the chat, he gave an account of Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukin's incident'. Baba asked, 'What is it?' Dabolkar narrated the whole story. Then Baba said, 'Wonderful is the story. Did the story strike you, and did you catch its significance?' Anna Saheb said, 'Yes. The restlessness of my mind has vanished. I have got true peace and come to know the true path'. Then Baba said, 'My method is quite unique. Remember well this one story, and it will be very useful. To get knowledge (realisation) of the self, *dhyana* (meditation) is necessary. If you practise it continuously, the *vrinis* (thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Meditate always on my formless nature, which is Knowledge Incarnate, Consciousness and Bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on my form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your *vrittis* will be one-pointed and the distinction between the *dhyata* (meditator), *dhyana* (act of meditation) dhyeya (thing meditated upon) will be lost, and the meditator will be one with the consciousness and be merged in Brahman. The mother tortoise is on one bank of the river and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk nor warmth to them. The mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a downpour of nectar, the only source of

sustenance and happiness. Similar is the relation between the Guru 'and disciples.' Baba gave him sugarcandy and said, 'If you take this story to heart, remember it well, your state will be equally sweet. Your desires will be fulfilled and you will be happy. Meditate on the story; assimilate its spirit; then you will always remember and meditate on the Lord who will manifest himself to you.'

Now Hemad Pant was lucky enough to get a Government job for a short while, and thereafter he acted upon Baba's advice that he should serve Baba. So, he helped greatly in the management of Sai Baba's Sansthan, after 1918 or 1920-21. He looked after the accounts and helped greatly in the publication of Sai Lila Masik also. But his most important service was the writing of the first 51 or 52 chapters of the Sai Satcharitra. After his death in 1929, the 53rd chapter was added on and the complete book has been published. It is a monument of masterly, sonorous, Mahrathi verse, picturing Sai Baba's lilas and setting forth Baba's utterances and conduct in a way that would always be remembered. So, the effect of the study of Baba's lilas is the great service Hemad Pant renders. Baba himself said that a study of his lilas would put an end to ignorance and ferry people across samsara. It would make them get laya (absorption) in Sai by constantly remembering his lilas, words, and nature, especially his nature as *sarvantaryami*. Baba, as he himself declared, is the soul of all souls. Every thing is his form. By constant meditation on Baba's lilas, one can get an experience of Baba in all forms.

*Sarvabhutastham aaimaanam sarvabhatanicha aatamani eekshate
yogayuktatma sarvatra samadarscanah*

(EG.VL29)

i.e. seeing God in all creatures, and all creatures in God, by steadfast practice of yoga, the yogi has equality in viewing all. Numerous other passages of the Gita, e.g. (18)61, (5)7, 10(20), 7(9) show how important it is to get a correct view of and feeling towards all creatures proceeding from reverence, to sympathy or love and finally to identity with them. The technique to be adopted for achieving these steps is pointed out here. And this is the greatest service that Dabolkar has rendered.

Before closing the chapter, we might well note that the most important contribution is the central truth of Sai Baba's life and teaching, viz, that true religious growth is not based upon the study of the Vedas or mantras or the adoption of any yoga practice or any ritual but the recognition of love as the beginning, middle and end of all religion and that love is best and easiest when directed not to an abstraction or peripheral idea but to a concrete Guru whom you love and who loves you, and that all other '*sadhanas*' are unnecessary. There are other truths Dabolkar gained in his contact with Baba which have been revealed for the benefit of others though they have little importance.

Baba takes charge of his bhaktas even when he does not expressly use the words which he used to Dixit "Kaka why have you any cares, all cares are mine". Baba said of Dabolkar "I serve within his house" i.e. Baba agreed to look after the temporal welfare as well as the spiritual welfare of Dabolkar. The reality of this protection and guarding influence not only in his case but also in those of his relations, Dabolkar noted time and again. Having found Baba a precious gem or mine, he took with him to Baba his two sons-in-law, one after another (R. R. Samant and Galwankar) as also the rest of his family. The experiences of these two sons-in-law are found in Devotees' Experiences, Vol II, published by All India Sai Samaj, and they prove how Baba looked after their interests. Galwankar's statement is specially interesting. He stated in 1938 when he was still in official harness that Baba fixed him birth after birth on the high moral and spiritual level of truth and integrity and provided satisfactorily for all his wants. Once Baba appeared to Galwankar and asked him "What do you want?" Galwankar wanted nothing but Baba's grace and he got it. He used to get sudden spells of bliss of Baba. In the midst of his official work he would suddenly stop and for some moments he would be enjoying the bliss of Baba, His services to Sai Baba are his gift of sites, etc. and what he did when appointed as trustee of Sai Samasthan, an office which he held upto his death in 1945. The benefits to other relations are not recorded by Dabolkar or others, but some of the benefits to Dabolkar himself have been recorded. We shall just refer to one and close.

The receipt in miraculous circumstances of Baba's portrait is considered of great value. In Chapter 40 of Sai Satcharitra Dabolkar records such a favour. One Alii Mohamed, a friend of his, had many big pictures of saints including Sai Baba. To a very orthodox Mohamedan, pictures of saints are taboo. In a fit of iconoclastic zeal all the pictures he had were thrown away in the ocean near Bombay but strangely enough Sai Baba's picture which was over the door escaped notice and was not thrown away and Alii Mohamed did not want to destroy Baba's picture. He came and gave it to Dabolkar on the Holi festival of 1917. Just a few hours earlier Dabolkar had a dream or vision. A sanyasi (evidently a form taken by Baba) came to him and said that he would attend the Holi dinner as Dabolkar's guest. So while serving leaves and dishes to the entire family, a central seat with a fully served leaf was placed in expectation of the Sanyasi or Baba in any other form. None appeared and the family was just about to start their meal when steps were heard on the stairs. Dabolkar got up and met the visitor, Alii Mohammad, who then gave him the picture, promising to account for the presentation at a more convenient time later on. The picture reverently received was placed in the seat of honour, the central seat, reserved for the guest. Thus Baba kept up the promise made the previous night to attend the Holi or Shimga dinner.

That convenient occasion came only in 1926. Then Ali narrated to Dabolkar how Ali was operated on for a swelling in the leg and had to stay for months at Bombay in his brother-in-law's use. That brother-in-law told him that his (Ali's) health would improve if he threw away or destroyed all the pictures of saints kept in Ali's Bandra house. A manager was sent to carry out the order for destruction and all other pictures had been taken and thrown away or destroyed. For some unaccountable reason, Baba's picture alone escaped the fate of the rest. Ali had faith in Baba and yet did not dare to keep his portrait. So after consultation with some friends, he took it to Dabolkar as the proper recipient for the same. The presentation following the dream vision impressed Dabolkar, as a remarkable chamatkarcic favour of Baba to himself.

CHAPTER VI

Sri Upasani Baba or
Kasinath Govind Upasani Maharaj
(as he was known when he lived at Shirdi)

Very high praise to him is found in Sai Leela Masik and Sai literature written a few years after Baba shed his mortal coil. His (Upasani's) very great service to Sai Baba is the fact that through him myriads, if not lakhs, of people came to know about and worship Sai Baba. Sri Upasani Baba was widely regarded as a wonderful saint with vast and miraculous powers that could help individuals and even nations, and that was why Mahatma Gandhi with a view to secure national welfare approached him about 1927. The fame of Sri Upasani Baba was at one time so great (1920-1934) that people found it difficult even to get access to him. About 1930 he visited the house of Sri Sail Govind Banathwalla at Volkeswar, Bombay, and he sat up on an upper storey, and people wanting to take darsan of him had to climb up by one flight of steps and get down by another flight of steps. This procession of darsan by pilgrims went on from 1 p.m. till 9 p.m. Such was the vast mass that wanted to take Upasani's darsan at Bombay. If in a city like Bombay tens of thousands were attracted to him, one may safely assume that throughout Maharashtra, Upasani's fame drew lakhs of people to him, and Sai Baba, as his Guru, was introduced to lakhs of people as the cause and source of Upasani Baba's greatness and powers. "If the chela is so great, how much greater must be the Guru", people said.

This was the first and direct service of Sri Upasani to the Sai Baba movement. The second and indirect service of Upasani Baba is mentioned later on.

Sri Upasani was born of a very orthodox sect of Brahmins who were village priests, that is, priests in the village of Satana. His grandfather Sri Gopal Sastri had left the village to stay at Baroda as the Raja's Court adviser in religious as well as literary matters for a number of years. Gopal Sastri was also the adviser to many other Petty States on matters of religion and was the author of several books, none of which has probably been printed, Govinda Sastri, the father of

Upasani, though a good scholar, had to earn bread for the family by being a copyist in Dhulia Civil Court. Upasani was one of the five sons of Govinda Sastri, and stayed with his grandfather Gopal Sastri at Satana. The family during the time that we are considering was really not very well off. The earnings of village priests being very small, they had just enough to eat and get along.

Kasinath Govinda Upasani Sastri, which is the real name of Upasani Baba, was born in 1870 (May 15, 1870) and his early education was practically nil. He was sent to an elementary school and very early in that period, a merciless master named Gharpure birched him severely. The boy cried and roaring with pain went to the Village Munsif to lodge a complaint. There the matter ended and his education also ended. He could have picked up the rudiments of the Purohit's learning necessary for carrying on the work of the Village Purohit, but Kasinath did not care to do so. On the other hand, he had a strong dislike for any education, and so was treated as a very dull boy and an exception to the family traditions of love of learning. His elder brother, Balakrishna Sastri, was highly advanced in Sanskrit study and became a Professor of Sanskrit in the Fergusson College, Poona, and was an Examiner for Sanskrit in M.A. in the Bombay University. But Kasinath was treated by everyone as good-for-nothing, and yet according to old and senseless customs, his parents insisted upon getting him married in spite of his protests, at the age of 14 (i.e. in 1883) to a girl of 8, who died in a year (1885). He was again married in 1885 to another girl who also died a year later. The home was already bitter; this marriage obligation tied round his neck made it worse. So he hated home and took to running away from home. At first he returned after a short stay outside. His later ramblings were prolonged. None of these is worth mentioning except the following.

In one of his long tours (in 1890). he was attracted by his habit of yoga or control of breath and meditation, and love of solitude, to Boorkhad Hill. There he could see from a great distance that in the midst of a forest, the hill projected from the forest and disclosed a natural cave or cavern. There was luckily a tree near it. As he approached it, he discovered that he could climb up into the cave with the help of the tree growing adjoining it and sending one of its branches into

the cave. He thought that this was excellent for his meditation. He sat up in the cave and tried to meditate. At first he thought he would like to see what his starvation (for there was no chance of getting food in the forlorn cave) would end in, and he wished to see death coming and taking him away. This, of course, was absurd. When death came, he might have no power to see death coming even if death had a visible form (cf. Nachiketas in Mythology). He spent days without food or drink, and finally before he became unconscious started namajapa of God, and his body was there in a fixed posture for an unknown period, and, due to lack of food, his muscles and skin were shrunk. He woke up to find that he was still alive, and there was the feeling of thirst. To quench it he could not discover the means. Luckily, the kind heavens poured down rain in a short time, and that rain, coming down the cavern, poured a mass of water into the cave that collected close to him. All his muscles were rigid except those of his right hand, and with this he could reach and pick up the collected water, and he drank up as much as he could. This restored some degree of vigour in him, and he massaged his rigid body. He began again dreaming and he had a vision which was as follows:— "A Hindu and a Muslim standing by his side pulled off his entire skin disclosing thereby his divinely bright body within him. Pointing to that body they said 'Why do you wish to die? We will not let you die! we are behind you'¹ and they vanished." He then ventured to move like a lizard on to the branch of the tree which adjoined the cave. And from that branch, he dropped down. He was glad to see that he did not break his limbs by a fall of about 20 feet or so. He moved on slowly on his haunches to an adjoining village where the poor residents were living by collecting fuel from forests and selling it. He passed some time living upon the milk and wild grain supplied by these villagers, and then came back to his home. This stay in Boorkhad cave is still remembered by his devotees who have tried to erect some memorial there of his early yoga practice in the cave. After his return, misfortune still dogged him, and he resumed a rambling life.

Sri Upasani Maharaj had bitter experience of life in his ramblings. He went to Poona City where his elder brother was leading a respectable life as Professor of

a College. Sri Upasani would not go to his brother's house. He went out begging his food in some nooks and corners, very often being refused any food.

This bitter portion of his life may be said to end with his grandfather Gopal Sastri's death in 1891. After that, Kasinath began to realise that he must do something to earn his bread, and so, he went to Sangli and got coached up in Ayurveda and Sanskrit Grammar under Sangli Venkataramanachar (1892-1895). Thus equipped, he went out to Amraoti, and there practised medicine (1896-1905). He was unlucky at the outset but soon began to prosper. Amongst those who accepted medicines from him was G. S. Khaparde, a leading lawyer and the right hand man of Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak. Sri Kasinath started and conducted for three years (1902-1905) a Medical Mahratti monthly (*Beshaja Ratnamala*) in which he advertised the patent medicines that he manufactured and with his practice and sale of medicines, he collected a small capital for which he wanted good investment. This was about the year 1907 when, in Gwalior, the State was disposing of Malguzari lease estates. One estate of 2,000 acres could be had by merely paying down Rs. 600 as advance money and agreeing to pay fixed rents which might be collected from the tenants or from the forest or other produce. So, the doctor invested his money in Malguzari, and went to live on his estate (1906-1908) but found that he had made a huge mistake. The estate had been thrown up by the previous holder because he could not pay the fixed rental instalments as the tenants would not pay, and the forest and other lands would not yield. Not knowing all that, he had taken up the estate, and found it difficult to pay up the dues to the State, whereupon warrants for seizure of his goods were executed by the village officers even at night when his wife was alone. And to harass him, there were plenty of enemies. The tenants defied him to collect the rent, and the village officers, whose co-operation was necessary to collect the rents, withheld their co-operation. So, after a year or two of struggle with adverse circumstances, Kasinath could not get anything there, but lost his health and all that he had and returned home a broken man with broken fortune and ruined health. Soon after, he bethought himself once again of holy pilgrimages, and started with his wife (the 3rd) in April 1910 to Omkareswar Lingam on an island in

the middle of a river (Narmada and its Branch Cavery), and there tried to practise Pranayama himself, and his wife was seated at the foot of that huge lingam (called Somanath or Gouri Shankar) with a diameter of about 6 or 7 feet. He fell down unconscious and his wife sprinkled river water, and that restored his consciousness. But his breathing was not restored, and remembering the usual practice of artificial respiration, he began to heave his whole body and uttered groans so as to move the respiratory muscles of his chest slowly and with considerable groaning and effort, he began to breathe. But he felt that his breathing might stop at any moment. He was afraid to strain at stools or to go to sleep, lest during these times the breathing should stop. He tried to get medicine. But the doctors stated that he had got trouble in the course of his yogic practice and they could not furnish him with a cure. Thinking that he should resort to yogis only for a cure, he went (April 1911) to Rahuri where there was a yogi Kulkarni by name. But that yogi, after listening to his account, stated that he was not having any disease at all, that his breathing was one of the accidents of yogic practice, that it would become normal again, in due course, that his yogic condition was far advanced and advised him to go to Sai Baba. Hearing the name 'Sai Baba' uttered by the Rahuri yogi, he said, 'Sai Baba must naturally be a Mohamadan, and I am a Sastri's son and grandson, and so bowing to a Muslim is out of the question'. Therefore, Kasinath declined to go. But while staying with that yogi, he was walking in the streets, and he met an old Mohamadan who questioned him about his trouble, and then gave him the advice: 'This trouble is *vatha* and will be cured by your avoiding cold drink, and drinking water as hot as your mouth can bear'. Dr. Kasinath had no respect for this advice and treated it as worthless, and went away to Jejuri on his way to meet a Hindu yogi Phatak by name at Moregaon. At Jejuri he again sat up for yoga practice under a thick prickly pear bush, and there, after some time, he felt (he pangs of thirst. To quench it. he went to a stream and was about to drink its cold water. Suddenly the old man that appeared at Rahuri, 156 miles away, was seen at this stream, and he said, "What! Are you trying to kill yourself? I told you to drink hot water and avoid cold water". So, he went into the village and was taking hot drink only. With that i.e.

with what he first thought to be a worthless recipe, health was fairly restored, for he got good sleep which he never had before.

Then he went to Narayan Maharaj¹³ of Kedgaonbet, Bombay, a famous Datta Upasaka possessed of marvellous powers. When he represented to Narayan Maharaj that he wanted help for health, Narayan Maharaj made him chew betel and nut, and said that he was finely painted inside and outside, and asked him to go away. Kasinath could not make out what he meant. When he went again and asked him, Narayan Maharaj said that there was nothing more for him to do, and so he started back for Satana, and, on the way, called at the Rahuri Yogi's house, and on the insistence of that Rahuri Yogi, went to Shirdi just to pay a brief formal visit to Sai Baba. This was on 27th June 1911.

The first interview between Sri Sai Baba and Kasinath is a very interesting study of the personalities of both, and the method of operation of Sai Baba peculiar to each case. After staying a day, Kasinath went to take leave of Baba to go home. Baba said, 'What so soon? When are you returning?' Kasinath protested that it was not easy for him to return, 'Then' Baba said, 'you had better stay. Do not go away'. The alternatives presented to Kasinath were both bitter to him. "What, either to stay on for ever or to go and return in eight days!" and when he was thus puzzled, Sai Baba said, 'Well, go. I shall see what I can do'. This might appear a threat to those who knew Sai Baba's powers. But as Kasinath understood none of his powers, he simply thought permission had been given to him to go, though rather gruffly. He then went away. He was anxious to get back home now that his health had been restored and have a pleasant Grihasthasrama life with his young wife (third wife). But a strange thing happened. He went out a few miles and stayed at a neighbouring village for a bath in the Godavari. Then another day he started and went a short distance, and again was stopped by something attractive. Like this for seven days, he was within a radius of eleven miles, and on the eighth day he was at Kopergaon with the Brahmachari at the Datta Temple on the bank of the river Godavari, i.e., only

¹³ *It was Narayin Maharaj's blessing that thus pushed Upasani lu Sai and helped him to achieve greatness. It was Narayan Maharaj's blessing that enabled B.V.N. Swami to get the help of Sai Devotees to write about Baba

six miles from Shirdi. That Brahmachari told him to go to Shirdi and be with Sai Baba. Kasinath, however, declined to accept that proposal. As they were talking, a tonga drew up, and the inmates came out. They were asked by the Brahmachari, 'Where are you going?' They said, 'To Shirdi'. Then the Brahmachari said, 'Take this Kasinath with you'. Kasinath said, 'No, I have been there already'. Then the visitors said, 'That is the best reason. We have not been there. We want some one to be with us to guide us'. Kasinath said that he had not taken his meal and he had no carriage fare, and thus pleaded vain excuses. They said, 'We have the carriage fare, and we will give you food'- So, in spite of himself, out of a mere desire to oblige these visitors and to oblige the Brahmachari, he got into the cart which straightway sped on to Shirdi. There they all alighted. They all bowed before Baba. Baba said to Kasinath, "You have come back! How many days is it since you left?" 'This is the eighth day', confessed Kasinath. 'What!' Baba remarked, 'You said you would not come back in eight days'. Then the spell over Kasinath seemed to disappear, and he woke up and said, 'What, Baba, I cannot understand this. I was eager to go home, and I wonder how I did not go back home. This must be all your doing'. Baba said, 'Yes. I have been with you all these eight days dogging your heels'. Then it flashed upon Kasinath that Sai Baba was (always) wielding vast powers over people's mind, that when he could not think of going home, and when the Brahmachari and others were asking him to go to Shirdi, it was all the work of Sai.

So, he was under Sai's *Akarshana and Sthambhana* and that was how he could not think of his home under that spell! He was -aghast at this vast control over minds and bodies of not one but of many. Then he resigned himself to fate as he called it. He thought 'Some vast Power is seizing me. So, I must bend to it'. Then he was staying on, hoping time and again to get leave of Baba to get back. Through Shama he asked for permission. Baba said, 'Let him stay on'. Then Shama asked what he was to do. Baba's answer was, "To do nothing". Kasinath could not understand what he should do remaining there doing nothing. But doing nothing was only the external appearance. "Doing nothing" in Baba's

parlance meant being receptive and receiving everything from him. In Baba's Guru parampara, Sishya's work is simply nothing. The entire operation of moulding, remoulding, raising and reaching the top of the highest spiritual experience is the work of the Guru and the Guru alone. His mighty power moulds everything, internal and external, and the result is, the sishya is turned into the likeness of the Guru (*Apana Sarika Karitat*) and that is what Baba meant by saying, 'Let him remain doing nothing'. Baba asked him to go and live in solitude (as he already loved solitude) at Khandoba Temple, just outside the village, and not mix with people but to remain alone, doing nothing.

Kasinath's tendencies could not be so very easily overcome. Dull as he was considered to be as a boy by the superior members of his family, he was a great pandit especially after his studies at Sangli and literary efforts at Amraoti, when compared with the people at Shirdi. His learning, his mastery of Sanskrit and general information were far superior to those of the ordinary pandit. He was anxious to go on either with mantra or with study which alone he understood to be the constituents of real religion. Baba allowed him to indulge in these for a time, but these were not part of Baba's course for his pupil. Studies are hindrances, as they raise the thought in the minds of the pupil that he is learned, that he is something, and that he must understand everything put to him with his intellect and then rise with the help of that intellect and his book learning. These are all egregious mistakes in Baba's course. In Baba's course, the spiritual experience is a sort of chemical extract inherent in and constituting the spiritual body of Baba, the Guru, and is poured into the soul of the sishya which must receptively receive and absorb the same. The entire work is that of the Guru. The sishya must swallow with deep humility, passivity, and receptivity and assimilate the pre-digested food. Kasinath could not understand this, and went on with his studies especially when he met congenial spirits like G. S. Khaparde, Chidambaram Pillai and others and later went on telling stories and lecturing. Anyhow Baba had given him directions, and set to work upon him in a number of ways.

The first essential preparatory step in Baba's course is not book learning, but the development of humility and receptivity. These would result from perfect faith, absolute faith, unlimited and powerful faith in the Guru. The Guru must be everything to the sishya, the giver of bread, the giver of life and light and the giver of all that life is worth living for, and at one stroke. He must not regard anything else. This alone is the tyaga of *Tan, Man, Dhan* - body, mind and possessions. This, Baba himself has fully described in setting out his relations with his own Guru (See BC & S. 175) already set out in a previous chapter, Baba expected that others who came as pupils to him should adopt the same course. But none of the persons that came to Baba could adopt the entire course. As Baba himself said on one occasion, Is there anyone who will serve me as I served my Master, that is, with perfect *nishta* and with absolute surrender? There was none. However anxious Kasinath might be to benefit from Baba's goodwill, absolute surrender of self was not there. Absolute ridding himself of all the contacts with external world was not there and no idea of giving up Grihastha Ashrama. He was still thinking of his own home at Satana, his wife, his mother, and others. He hoped to join them after achieving progress under Baba and enjoying the result of that progress with his family. That was his idea. But that was not Baba's idea. Baba wanted him to be free from all shackles and absolutely independent of all family or other connections. Sai Baba wanted to make him feel that he was entirely dependent upon Sai and Sai alone at least during the period of probation. Hence. Baba suffered him to get into a number of difficulties for the very essentials of livelihood. Food was easy for a time to get, but very soon the food problem became the main problem of his life. At first he had some moneys, and lived with the help of what he could get with his moneys. But Baba had strange purposes in asking for dakshinas. Upasani Maharaj had given some dakshinas but retained Rs.10 with him thinking that he could bank upon it and live upon it till he could get further sums. But Sai Baba asked him for dakshina of Rs.10 and deprived him of his bank and reduced him to zero. Then suddenly Kasinath felt he was in mid air unsupported. That is just what Sai Baba wanted him to feel. That is, the sishya must feel that he has no earthly support

barring the Guru. But *akinchanya*, i.e. no possessions or help, is a very painful experience. Persons who carefully read this book, especially with a view to get from Baba the fullest blessings, would take great interest in the experience of Upasani and others who had this feeling and who found it difficult at every step, even to catch the meaning of every experience though they were with Baba. Sai Baba acts on the principle, '*Yasya anugraham ichchami, tasya sarvam harami aham*', that is, God says, 'When I wish to benefit any one, I take away everything from him'. This seems a strange way from the worldly point of view of benefiting a person by reducing him to a 'Zero'. But worldly zero is the beginning point of the spiritual pile on the fort that is about to be built in the soul of the sishya. The zero is the first essential for attaining humility and faith and courageous confidence. Zero on earth is the first step to heaven or self-realisation. One should not feel ashamed to beg. One should not have any feeling of fear or shame at all. One should have the *Daivi Sampat* (E.G. XVI), steadily built up into him, beginning with

"Abhayam, satva samsuddhih

Jnana Yoga Vyavasthitih

Kshama.....scanti.....dhruti.etc"

i.e., fearlessness, clarity of pure insight or intuition, remaining in the state of knowledge and yoga, endurance, calm or peace of mind, self-possession or assurance, etc. or what is aptly expressed by the English poet thus:—

"Fine breadth of vision, self control, a boundless charity A gentler tongue, a stronger faith, more perfect clarity. In spirit vision; patience vast—more patience still, and more, Wisdom to know—and to forget—all that has gone before; Courage to smile, though sorrow fill unto its brim your cup~"

These are required to make a pupil an adept under Sai. For all these the background has been and is being furnished by Baba in his omniscience and kind control and open avowal of protection reminding us of the very similar offers and exhortation of the Palestine Samartha addressed to the men trained as his apostles, thus:—

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not therefore: Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

It is by the confidence in Guru and God developed by such assurances and training that the apt pupils have thus set out their bold attitude like that of Kunti who said "*Vipadah santu nah scascvat*" i.e. let frequent sufferings come to us, for they make us remember you, the remover of sorrows. We then welcome trial, sickness, ennui, privations, injustice..! All of it can only come, directed by God's Hand, and will wound the soul only in order to cleanse some spot within. "God (i.e., Guru Deva) will allow no suffering, no trial above what you are able to bear"; "If we are slighted, misunderstood, maligned, or persecuted, what does it matter? These injuries will pass away; but the peace and love of God will remain with us forever, the reward of our faith and patience."

Sai's sishya should not have preference for nice dishes and hatred for either bad dishes or no dishes or starvation. All Dvandvas, that is, (1) the presence or absence of food, (2) the presence or absence of shelter, (3) fame or obloquy, should all be one and the same to the sishya; and his *ashta pasas*, i.e., eight fetters should be cut. The Guru's love to him is a shield against all attacks. He must in such bitter circumstances raise his faith to the highest pitch and feel, 'Come what may, I have still my Guru to support me. He knows what is best for me and will provide it'. This absolute love to the Guru is accompanied by a surrender of every thing else. The love and the surrender are the two sides, obverse and reverse, of the discipleship.

Therefore, Baba put Kasinath into the 'Zero' position which became very distressing to him. He had to depend upon doles of grain given to him by some visitors. But seeing his difficulties, the manager of Dixit's Wada and the free (food) hotel run there invited him at the suggestion of Kaka (H. S.) Dixit to take his meals there free. He did so for a time. But the number of enemies that Kasinath had, had grown, especially on account of the marked declarations by Sai Baba favouring him and the unsocial behaviour of Kasinath. He thought highly of himself and would not care to placate or hobnob with the big men of the

place, or among the visitors that came there. So, one day, the Manager said to Kasinath, in the presence of several, as he sat at his dinner, 'From tomorrow forward you are not to have your meal here'. Kasinath became indignant. He said, 'Then why have the meal even to-day?' He got up and said, 'I do not want the meal. It is the dependence on the meal that makes us servile, and our position bitter'. So he went away and starved for two or three days. Gradually some relief or other came to him, but still it was already fasting—Upavasa. His name was often played upon, as "Upavasani", that is, the man starving. Diseases attendant upon such starvation, namely, constipation and piles troubled Kasinath and added to his miseries. Sai Baba was aware of every thing and allowed him to go on enduring all these bitter experiences.

Many a sishya turns against the Guru and says 'If he is all powerful, if he is taking care of me in so many other matters, why does he not save me from this trouble?' Unfortunately, many a sishya fails to answer this question properly and loses his faith in the Guru or weakens his faith. It was much the same position in Kasinath's case. He could not understand how he was to get on at Shirdi without any funds and without any persons undertaking his feeding, etc. He resolved to fast as much as he could and put up with suffering. Baba's aim was that amidst such suffering he must pick up faith and feel that his Guru was supporting him. This is set out in Baba's parable of how his own Guru treated him. When he met his Guru, he said, his Guru tied a rope to his feet and that rope was tied to a tree, and he was allowed to dangle, head down and legs up, his body being just over a well, not touching the water, but almost touching it. This is the position of a sishya like Kasinath and sishyas like Baba. The allegory of being hung over a well is easy to see through. Samsara is the well. We have heaps of difficulties. We are tied to our position and kept in the midst of these difficulties, The Guru wants to see whether the difficulties strengthen or weaken our faith. In the case of Baba, his Guru after some time returned to Sai's place and untied his rope and asked, 'How have you fared all this time during my absence?' Sai Baba's answer was, 'Exceedingly happily'. That truth was an extraordinary answer for a man whose body was hung up over a well and tied to a tree and left to himself in the

above fashion. But Sai Baba's answer showed that he had perfect faith in his Guru, and that in the midst of all difficulties in Samsara, he never lost his faith. He knew that his Guru would protect him and come and help him at the time chosen by the Guru. The Guru did come at his own fixed time and removed him from trouble. Unfortunately, in the case of others like Kasinath, the result of the trial is not equally good. Kasinath could not understand that these trials were meant to sharpen and strengthen his faith in the Guru. He thought that sorrow was sorrow whatever might be the occasion, and he could not see in sorrow the hand of Baba, who was using this sorrow for a very high purpose.

'For who can so foreclose the years. And find in loss a gain to match Or reach a hand through time to catch The far off interest of tears?'

The present sorrow has a distant gain, and one must have ample faith to keep steadfast in the midst of present sorrow, and dwell in the mind upon the distant gain. But alas, how few realise this! Anyhow, Sai Baba was there to look after him, and he got on fairly well. We shall see how Baba coached him up for his course.

Baba's course was to give first *nishta* or full faith and secondly *saburi* or patience, to wait for the benefits of the course to be given at the time considered by the Guru to be proper. These are the two coins which Baba's own Guru wanted him to place at his (Sai Baba's Guru's) feet, and Sai Baba said he did give them to his Guru. Similarly Baba expected Kasinath to develop *nishta* and *saburi* and offer these as *dakshina* to him. Kasinath was slowly developing both *nishta* and *saburi*, and when these two were perfect, the seeds of instruction sown in the heart of the pupil would bear fruit. We shall proceed in further paragraphs to point out what those further courses were, and how important realisations were invisibly and imperceptibly planted and developed in the *sishya's* heart and nature by the Guru. Before proceeding to these, it is just as well to refer to the *Nishta* or faith question once again.

Faith in a Guru and treating him as God, that is Guru Deva, is absolutely essential, the *sine qua non* of all real advancement in Baba's line. Faith seems to be easy to place but when any one tries to place faith in a particular Guru or a

holy person that he visits or meets, he discovers that there are very sharp limits to the faith that arises. Faith in one sense is voluntary, but if one traces the real starting and progress of faith, one sees that it depends upon so many circumstances which are not under one's control. And the growth of faith seems to be peculiar to the constitution of some. The previous mental habits cultivated have a great deal to do with a person's faith. Some people are cursed. They are ever determined to contradict anything and everything and some are sceptic or ever doubting. This habit of doubt or aggressive competitiveness is ruinous to the starting or development of faith. Some, on the other hand, are generally very receptive, as they say in Mahratti 'Bale Bole' that is, ready to accept and believe. Such people will find the starting of faith very easy, because faith is a habit with them, faith in anything and everything that is placed before them by any one and every one. Some may fancy such an attitude ruinous to one's safety and progress in worldly affairs. But this is really not so. It may be that in one or two matters such Bale Bole people get duped, but for one or two losses that way, the sympathy that they receive from others and the help that they get from superiors like Guru will make ample amends. So, even from the worldly point of view readiness to believe, that is a disposition to grow and develop faith is not a disadvantage. It is not meant here to say that people should not reason and find out whether truth, facts or courses placed before them are acceptable or not according to the principle of reason implanted in each by God himself. 'Prove all things' said Saint Paul. That is to a certain extent correct. Even the man, who has faith, depends upon proof in a number of things, in many a matter. But on the whole his tendency to have faith and accept things on faith predominates. It is in such characters that faith grows rapidly and yields fruit also abundantly.

No doubt mere faith is not enough. Strength and purity of character are absolutely essential. Strength requires some degree of standing upon one's own legs and estimating even the Guru that one accepts for one's faith. In the beginning, even the Bale Bole has some test by which he determines whether to accept a particular person as Guru or not and whether the circumstances put forward before him justify such faith. But once accepted, the faith-natured people

stick on to their faith, and that is about the best disposition, often hereditary but sometimes developed by events or environment, and this is considered a special asset in matters of religious progress (as contrasted with perpetual doubters. *Samscayatmas* BG (IV)(40)

In the case of Upasani Baba, he was brought up under very orthodox parents, and there was abundance of faith in his home. But there was also a certain amount of dependence upon one's own judgement as to the materials necessary for progress - even for spiritual progress. Gopal Sastri was after all a village purohit and for the welfare of people, temporal and spiritual, would administer mantras, tantras, etc. not always resting upon mere prayer with faith. Even yantras, mantras and tantras depend upon faith. So, to some extent, Kasinath was accustomed to regard faith as an essential element in his nature. But to a large extent he was proceeding on rationalistic lines, which also are developed in a purohit's home, could not easily be settled by a short stay of Kasinath with Baba.

Kasinath's great difficulty in the matter of faith was the peculiar *modus operandi* of Sai Baba. Sai Baba on one or two occasions declared everything openly, and Kasinath was lucky in having Sai's plans disclosed to him at the very outset of his contact with Sai Baba. Sai disclosed to him that he (Sai) was the person who cured Kasinath's disease by prescribing a recipe at Rahuri and enforcing the same at Jejuri, that he was intimately interested in him, ¹⁴that their ancestors were intimately connected with each other for thousands of years, and therefore, the obligations between the two were so great that they could not easily be settled by a short stay of Kasinath with Baba. Baba said, 'These accounts will take two or four years to settle'. When Shama asked on behalf of Kasinath 'What account?' Baba said, 'I have to settle the accounts of every one who comes to me'. This was rather inexplicable because Sai Baba was not running a money-lending or pawn-broker's business. Anyhow one thing was clear, that is, that Sai Baba did declare that he was under a very heavy obligation

¹⁴ Baba had his peculiar way of revealing this to Upasani alone, leaving others present in ignorance of what he meant

(RINANUBANDHA) arising from contact for decades or centuries towards Kasinath, and that he was determined to do his level best for the uplift of Kasinath. But what the latter was to do for his part was not clear to him at all. Shama asked on behalf of Kasinath 'You ask him to remain here. What is he to do?' Baba's answer was, 'Let him do nothing'. This would appear ludicrous in the eye of any one, to stay in a place doing nothing for four years! Though Kasinath did not leave the place, he could not easily understand what he was to do "doing nothing" for four years. Then the way in which Baba prepared him to rope him on to himself (Baba) was totally unintelligible. Baba seemed to be totally indifferent and not doing anything like an ordinary teacher or Guru. On special occasions, no doubt, he gave some instruction through visions and once or twice orally also when Kasinath met him in the flesh. But these were so few that they were apt to be forgotten, and Kasinath really would fancy nothing was being done towards him by Sai Baba. In point of fact when he met his elder brother, Balakrishna Sastri, probably (31-12-1911) he told him I do not understand what this Sai Baba is doing to me. It is totally unintelligible¹⁵. And Balakrishna Sastri also did not understand.

Forgetting the glorious future promised for him by Baba, Kasinath believed that he was soon to die at Shirdi in 1912, 1913. He said to Chidambaram Pillai that he was tortured like a dumb brute; this was the middle of 1912 and 1913. In November, 1912, he told a Samudrik Sastri, Palmist, that his life was miserable and wasted and wished to know if his future would be bad. That palmist evidently knew of Baba's assurances to Kasinath and believed them, and his words of Kasinath's divinity (divinity inferred from body marks) were valued by Kasinath though Baba's earlier assurance of achieving divinity had been undervalued or

¹⁵ (1) In the early part of Kasinath's stay at Shirdi he was not sure that his respiratory disease was cured, and had fears that he might die suddenly. He communicated his feeling to Shama who in turn transmitted it to Sainath Maharaj, who thereupon said (BCS7)

"Ye Jaga Maran Ko Nai, Taran Ko Hai!"

(means:- This Shirdi is no place for death, but a place for crossing death).

forgotten. One thing was clear, namely, that he was getting (so far as his physical and mental condition was concerned) from bad to worse. His discomforts were great and his mental peace seemed to be also lost. First when he was suspected to be a political refugee or a C.I.D. Officer, the villagers and the police threatened him, and he had to go to Sai Baba and complain. Baba said, 'Do not mind all that. I will look after you. Everything will be all right.' That trouble ceased after a while. But again other difficulties arose.

Baba told Kasinath that he was to remain there for four years and, though he did not like this, he had to put up with it. He had to simply keep quiet at the temple (Vittoba temple as Baba called Khandoba temple), and at the end of four years he would be the recipient of God's full favour and Shama would then come to him and take him out and place him in the open, i.e. as an object of reverence to all people, for he (Upasani) is or would be God or the full recipient of God's favours, which amounted to the same thing. Baba had told him that he need not do anything at all. Kasinath was not able to understand the course sketched out by Baba, and had no ambitions for God-realisation at such cost. He was a total stranger to that place (in fact he felt he was an exile) and appeared to many to be unworthy of the high honour conferred on him by Baba. So some devotees of Baba were jealous and one of them, a Prabhu (from Bombay), asked Baba, 'What, Baba, we have been attending upon you for years, and you seem to be conferring a copper plate grant of all your powers to this stranger, and are we all, therefore, to be neglected? Is it true that you are giving all your powers?' Baba was not to be frightened by any such questions. 'Yes', said Baba, 'I speak only the truth sitting as I do in this Masjid. What I have spoken, I have spoken. I have given everything to this person. Whether he be good or bad, he is my own. I am fully responsible for him, and, as for *sasana* or a grant, why a copper plate grant? I have given him a *Gold plate Grant*'. Turning to Kasinath, he said, 'Think which is better, copper or gold?' Kasinath was too much dazed by the prospect of four *gloomy* years to be spent at Shirdi, away from his wife and kith and kin at Satana, to give any rational answer. He said, 'I do not know, Baba'. Baba said, 'See, copper gets corroded and tarnished. Gold does not. Gold remains pure

always. You are pure. *You are Pure Bhagavan'*. In this way, Baba by his declaration of special consideration for Kasinath had caused considerable jealousy amongst some, and yet this did not succeed in making Kasinath place entire reliance on him and feel happy with his lot.

There were other sorts of troubles also for Kasinath. He was advised to keep himself to himself as far as possible and spend his time in solitude. But at first this was causing misapprehensions in the minds of some people. For a time in 1911 and 12 he and G.S. Khaparde and others had study classes for several months, and during that time, Kasinath was a student attending at Khaparde's study classes (of Paramamrita and Panchadasi) and took an active part, reading the text, putting questions and getting clear elucidations from G.S. Khaparde, who generally acted the part of the teacher in those classes. These catered to Kasinath's natural intellectual bent and were highly appreciated by him. But after these were over, the time was dull and Kasinath thought that the best way of his utilising the time was to do mantra japa. As every Sastri does, he also counted his mantra japa. For this purpose he was keeping pebbles to reckon the total number of hundreds of japa he had achieved. On one of these occasions, Baba came and asked what those pebbles were for. When told they were for reckoning the japa, he kicked them aside, and asked, 'Who asked you to do all this? Keep quiet. Do nothing'. Kasinath could not understand how mantra japa was unnecessary, and what he could do by doing nothing or how he could benefit by doing nothing. He was a total stranger to Baba's methods of interior moulding or instruction of the sishya through the soul, not through the intellect, without the utterance of a single word and without meeting him in flesh. There was no study class with Baba, and Baba rarely talked to Kasinath. So there was no formal oral instruction, and what he got was in some strange way, which he realised to be Baba's teaching only very much later. We shall set out some of these strange teachings of Baba otherwise than by oral instruction. One strange method adopted by Sai Baba in the case of Upasani (for Sai Baba adopted different ways for different persons) was to convey the instruction through vision and pictures.

One may wonder what "pictures" could be seen at Shirdi, where there were no cinema houses. Let us see how Kasinath began to see pictures and get instruction and edification. However, we must remember that edification through pictures was a very minor item in Baba's procedure for the main portion of it was concerned with Baba as the powerful dynamo of love, gripping the Sishya's little vessel of love and charging it fully (though slowly and gradually) with all its fullest power (*Apana Sarika Karitat*).

Kasinath was a regular performer of his *trikala sandhya*, and for the noon *sandhya*, the orthodox take water in their palms and offering it to the Sun throw it out towards the east. This is called '*Arghya with Gayatri*'. On such an occasion, Kasinath held water in both his palms, and the noon day Sun was glittering brightly in the reflection found in the water held in the palms. Kasinath went on gazing at it, and the result can easily be guessed. As medical books describe it, an excessive exposure of the balls and needles found at the end of the optic nerve results in paralysing them and the power to see and discriminate with the help of light is lost by reason of such paralysis. A full description of this is to be found in medical books. Kasinath's experience on that occasion was his first, and he could not understand how seeing the reflection affected him. He lost the power to see anything, and everything appeared dark to him, though it was noon day. Then he began to think that the sun's rays were coming into his head and going out through his eyes: He fancied number of things, because he could not interpret the physiological effects of over-exposure to sunlight and he feared that these symptoms betokened the approach of death. He ran up (thinking that he had some disease) to some friendly or well disposed houses in the village and asked them to cure him of his trouble either by fomentation or by other means. They found fomentation and other processes useless and they believed starvation was the cause and gave him liquid food. He could not gulp it. They thought this stage of his, which may be described as craziness, was *Brahmishta Avasta*, to which Yogis developing Yoga are exposed, and which he had got by Sai's grace.

The various misfortunes that befell the physical and mental constitution of Kasinath at Shirdi during his probation are too numerous to be fully set out and we shall deal only with a few of them and show how these misfortunes were turned into gain. As mentioned earlier, in June or July 1912, further feeding at Dixit Wada was refused, and he indignantly resolved not to touch food, as food it was that made people fawn, cringe, and become dependent. He fell into a violent rage of *Anna Dvesha* ailment phobia. Even when friends send him food afterwards, the food looked repulsive in his eyes. It smelt and looked like excreta. If he put a bit into his mouth, he could not gulp it. It stuck in the throat. When it was in his mouth, he fancied he had already eaten it. If by chance he swallowed a bit, he felt his stomach was overloaded. Therefore, all the food that was sent to him was thrown away to dogs, pigs, birds, and other creatures. All this look extremely distressing, and none could guess whether there would be any good out of this. In fact Kasinath also was very much perplexed, and he felt that life was indeed very bitter. He thereafter had occasion to express his real feelings only to those in whom he could confide such as Sri Sai Baba, Dr. Chidambaram Pillai. and Narsobawadi palmist (Nov. 1912). When he reported his condition to Sai Baba, Baba said "I am always with you. You need not fear. The more you suffer now, the happier and more excellent will be your future. You in one scale, and the world in the other. You are going to be an Avadhuta (naked). Hundreds will rush to take your darsan'. This was Baba's prophecy, and it really came true (1920-1935). But at that time, they could not be appreciated by the pupil. One thing was noticeable. In spite of his starvation, his physical frame did not give way. He could still roll stone rollers on the road and do other bits of hard physical labour, and, as for his pulse, Chidambaram Pallai examined it about April 1913, and found it 40 to the minute. By July he found it 20 to the minute. And yet Kasinath was able physically to undertake hard manual labour. This was treated to be Sai Baba's miraculous intervention on his behalf. Yet Kasinath could not get over his bitter feelings. When the dazzling sun robbed him temporarily of eye sight, and made him fancy that the sun's rays were coming out from inside his

head through his eyes, he feared as stated already that these were symptoms of coming death.

Again in July 1913, he mentioned to H N. Apte, the famous Mahratti novelist, that his life was bitter, that he did not expect to live long, and would, therefore, be glad to see his relatives before he died. In consequence of his statement, Apte wrote to Balakrishna Sastri who came and visited him. After that his mother came and visited him. Still, he could not get over the impression that life was extremely bitter, and (as he told his brother) he could not see what was being done with him by Baba in connection with his spiritual attainments. Perhaps the starting of Upasani Maharaja's worship on 18-7-1913 (Guru Pournima) by Baba's orders might be expected to overcome this mentality. But it did not. One effect of his vision and mentality being upset was that he developed a peculiar habit. Suddenly, before him specks of light would float. Circles would be formed, springing up suddenly and expanding in front of him, coming near his body and disappearing. Several of these circles contained edifying visions like cinema pictures, and they suddenly vanished. He gave his own interpretation to some of these visions. Once, heaps of small specks of light were floating before him, and he thought at once that these were *paramanus*, that is, the primeval atoms of which the Universe is composed. That vision enabled him to understand the physical constitution of the Universe. Again he had another vision, after his long starvation. Suddenly the Earth, the Sky, and the Sun (*Trijagat*) were revolving round themselves many miles away from him, and he stood outside these three things and watched their revolution. The whirling Cosmos came gradually nearer and nearer to him all the while diminishing in size and finally vanished like a whirlwind at his side or into him. But in fact there was no wind or whirlwind. He wondered where he was, to see the world apart from him and the Universe apart from him. After 15 or 30 minutes, this vision disappeared. Kasinath drew the inference from it that this vision denoted the spiritual truth that all matter is in motion and that a person must get over his *Jagat Bhrama*, the whirl and illusion of the world, by getting beyond it, that is, by realising himself as not included within it. Therefore, he got the impression that the Universe, being in perpetual

revolution and change, is not permanent, that is, not real (Real or Sat is *Trikala Atita*) (the soul or Spirit etc.); for it appears, exists for a time, and ultimately disappears, that it emanates from him and reemerges in him, and that he is really outside and beyond all this seeming Universe. The world is evanescent (Maya) or Maya *manomaya* [SB XI (7) 7; (14) 46; (13) 26] and as the body is part of the material world, which is evanescent, the body is not he. This is something like subjective idealism, and is referred to as *Jmmodaya* in Upasani Lilamrita -the Mahratti memoirs of Upasani Baba written under his supervision and guidance.

The main work of turning and moulding the sishya Upasani's self into the Guru's self (*Apanci Sarika karitat*) is a hidden work, and no light can be cast on it by any of the incidents narrated here. In the moulding of Baba by his own Guru, love, wonderful, one-pointed, all-forgetting love, was the means. Baba's dealing with his devotees would rouse up love. But he adopted other processes also. The processes are mysterious and defy description. ¹⁶But several truths are realised by the pupil in the course of the development, and they might well be set out here. The real process of development is one complete whole. In our trying to understand it, we piece out one part or another and describe it. All our parts put together cannot make up the whole, and yet we are forced by our own defects and the peculiarity of the situation to describe only some parts and leave the description at that.

Now the ordinary worldly minded Upasani Maharaj had to be turned into a Samartha Sadguru absorbed in God, i.e. his Guru-God. The complete process involved a few threads which we shall trace now, however imperfectly it may be. In order to make the attached soul thoroughly detached by laya in Brahman or Guru God, one important essential or fundamental step emphasized in all religious courses is the conquest of desire. [c.f.B.G.(2) 70-72; (6)2,24,35, (7) 27, (16) 21 etc.] So long as attachment to earthly things lasts there is no possibility of

¹⁶ Condition of Baha. young Baba (5 to 15 years of age), lovingly dependent on his Guru is so markedly different from Kasinath's, aged 41. with a wife and fixed ways of thinking and feeling.

laya or merger in God, Guru God, or the Absolute. So, the first and foremost step is to dissociate oneself from one's attachment to worldly objects. Now this attachment takes the form or name of urges, physiological urges, psychological urges, etc. The lowest or the grossest are the first ones to be taken and crushed in the onward march. If we analyse the urges, we notice that we identify ourselves with our physico-psychical organism, and whatever is necessary for the maintenance and progress of that organism, we feel attached to. We are strongly drawn to that. So, the hunger urge, the sex urge and the self assertion and safety urges are the primary urges of every organism. Every organism, therefore, tries to sustain itself, if necessary, by beating down obstacles and obtaining whatever is necessary for it. This at once involves egotism (combative egotism), *Ahamkara*, and possessiveness, *Mamata*. The things to be possessed may be goods necessary for the stomach or things connected with sex. All these must be controlled by the sadhaka aiming at reaching the highest. If any ordinary person in his ordinary worldly condition wholly sacrifices these attachments, his organism will perish and he will die. So this course of crushing out urges is a thing peculiar to those aiming at the highest, and it is possible for them under the guidance of a Samartha Sadguru to keep on the physical organism and yet attain success after a length of time and a series of experiences. We shall now proceed to mention some of the experiences of Kasinath which enabled him to strengthen himself in combating these urges.

Let us take first the conquest of desire. Kasinath Maharaj had a vision one evening. He saw his grandfather Gopal Sastri standing outside Khandoba temple door and extending his arm as though to draw Kasinath's attention. When Kasinath looked at him, Gopal Sastri said, '*Aham, Madan, Gar*' twice. Kasinath could not make out anything. Then the grandfather flourished his hand and spoke loudly emphasizing each syllable that he uttered. He said '*Aham.....Madan.....Gar*' and then vanished out of sight. At once the meaning became patent. '*Aham*' means Ego or egotism, *Ahamkar*. '*Madan*' means lust or sex urge, *Kama* and *Mamakar*; and '*Gar*' means, poison. So, the whole phrase '*Aham.....Madan.....Gar*' was the declaration that egotism and lust were poison

and ruinous to his spiritual welfare. He noticed how excellent this teaching was and began repeating the words his grandfather uttered, namely, 'Aham.....Madan..Gar' as a very valuable teaching especially for one in his condition, for Kasinath was undoubtedly egotistic and had not overcome lust. Unless he got over both these, his soul would be ruined. So he went on repeating 'Aham..... Madan.....Gar' loudly to himself even though some of the onlookers thought that this was a mad prank of his.

We take next *Madan-lust*, conquest of Kamini and find out how this truth was being worked into his system. Kasinath Maharaj had from the time of his Omkar or Somnath Yoga practice (about April 1910) his breathing trouble and had thus the picture of sudden death haunting him every minute so as to drive away sleep from him for fear that sleep might mean death. He could not even strain at stools for then his breath might stop. So sex urge was unsafe or out of the question for such a person. During his Shirdi stay, which followed 14 or 15 months later. Baba took charge of him. Kasinath Maharaj declared openly at Sakori in the presence of this author (Sri B.V.N. Swami) and others that his Guru rendered him then and thenceforward physically impotent and mentally free from sex craving. This is a clear proof that Baba was carrying out his undertaking. Kasinath was to keep quiet and the Guru was to take every step necessary, in fact to book him the ticket, put him into the train, and send him to the destination, and all that Kasinath was to do was to keep quiet '*nimitta mat ram bhava savyasachin*', BG (II) 33. that is, 'Stand merely as a stalking horse'. These words uttered by Lord Krishna to Arjuna applied very well to this Kasinath Arjuna. He had merely to remain there at Shirdi doing nothing, and everything was going to be done and was being done by Sai himself.

This overcoming of the sex urge for the sishya by the Guru is only a single item in a more ambitious programme, that is. a programme of forgetting difference. *Neha nana asti kinchana* i.e. there is nothing different. One difference, of course, to be forgotten is the difference between the male sex and female sex. Baba helped Kasinath to overcome the feeling of difference in a very extraordinary way. One day Kasinath saw a circle expand before him, and inside

it a vision was enacted. He himself was there. Large groups of girls were there aged about 16. Two of them came out, caught hold of him, and tied him to a huge column in the middle of an extensive plain. They would not release him however hard he might beg. At last a couple of girls released him on condition that he should agree to become a woman. He doubted whether it was possible, but as they said it was possible, he agreed. They said they would put bangles on his wrist, which would render him permanently a woman. Then they gathered round him and told him several moral stores which went deep into him. Maharaj said that he frequently remembered those stories and felt that he was a woman, though his body was physiologically that of a man. Maharaj often in his later days at Sakori put on female dress and appeared as a woman. But this is hardly essential for us now. The main point is that it was the training to make him forget his sex, as thereby he became a fit person for persons of both sexes to resort to, i.e. a Samartha Sadguru. If only he had served out four years at Shirdi under Sai as ordered, his history would have been different.

Conquest of Kanchana: *Kunchana* means wealth, and conquest of desire for wealth seems impossible. For the body or the physical organism requires so many things, goods and services, and none of them can be had without wealth. So the wonder is how any sadhaka, even for aiming at the highest, can overcome desires for possessions; but Sai's order to Upasani was 'Sit Quiet, do nothing'. That means he was to do nothing to get wealth or to retain it against attacks. Baba had taken away his last Rs. 10 by asking for dakshina. So he had no money, and his cloth got thoroughly torn. When his brother sent a new cloth, that was stolen before he could wear it. Therefore it was clear that Sai intended that Kasinath should have nothing except unenviable rags and Sai would look after him. Sai had already said, 'You are going to be an *Avadhuta*, (naked),' and he did make him naked by making him lose clothes and having nothing to buy things with. But this is not sufficient. In the case of Upasani, his long courses at Satana, at Gwalior, and other places had strengthened the common idea that wealth is the "main chance", an advantage and a necessity. So, in order to get rid of this craving of a poor man for wealth, much spade work had to be done. Baba

again helped him through visions. As Kasinath sat up one day, he had the following visions. The first of these may be called *Papa Purusha Nirasana*. Baba came up to him at some mysterious place and sat up. Baba asked him to come near saying, 'I am going to give you Upadesh'. When Kasinath was trying to approach the Guru, a dark and dirty person behind Kasinath exactly like him, that is, his replica (old Adam) pulled him up and said, "Don't listen to the Guru. But listen to me". Twice this interruption took place. Then Sai got up, seized that dark person behind Kasinath, took him and placed him on a pile of faggots and burnt him. All that time Kasinath was saying 'Baba, it is me whom you are burning, it is me whom you are burning'. After completely burning him out, Baba turned to Kasinath and said, 'Yes. That was you no doubt. But you were in that sin form, namely, *Papa rupa*. I have destroyed him. You are now free from sin. By our united efforts there are many things to be achieved in the future. How can that be done if sin remains?'

Another vision which Kasinath Maharaj had was this. As he was passing along, there was a deep dark pit. A hand came out of that pit as he stood on the brink of it, and tried to pull him down into that dark abyss. Maharaj cried, 'Hands off. Who are you? Why do you drag me? If you do not let me go, I will report to Sai Baba'. At the mention of Sai's name, his feet were released. In that very vision, he learnt that the black abyss and black hand were Hell, that Hell would seize any one who came near, and it was a mistake to come near and tempt Hell. Later in another vision he was offered a lamp, and Baba told him, 'You must accept the lamp. It would light you and protect you everywhere. You will never be obstructed. You will escape obstacles, and will give light to hundreds in the future.' Maharaj accepted the light. Baba told him at one time, 'I will take away half of your head and give you half of my own'. Accordingly, Kasinath had a vision. Some ruffians came and cut his head off, scooped up the brain, ate the contents and ran away. Then in a later vision, Sai Baba took Maharaj to some mysterious place and showed him a heap of silver rupees, 225 feet long. 120 feet, broad, 4 feet high. Over that there was a princely bed with bolsters of lace cloth, and over all this was a richly dressed and gaily ornamented person. Sai

Baba asked Kasinath to see that man. Kasinath asked, 'Who is that?' Baba said, 'Have you not recognised yourself? It is you. Your body of sin has gone. That *papa purusha* has gone. This is your *punya purusha*'. Then, pointing to all the rupees, vast hoards of rupees, Sai Baba showed him a big room full of rupees and said 'There are hundreds and thousands of such houses filled completely with rupees. All these are ours. You will come to know all this by yourself. Thus, the subconscious mind of Kasinath Maharaj was being impressed by Sai Baba with the feeling that it was cloyed and glutted with ample possession of wealth.

The next lesson that Baba taught was through the same picture. Kasinath was trained in methods of karma and bhakti and though he professed adoption of Sankara's Advaita, his practice was all on the lines of bhakti and karma adopted by Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita. This is the practice of Uddhava Mutt to which Upasani's family belonged. So, he was not accustomed to Advaitic questioning on the lines sketched out in Vivekachudamani or to raise the question through introspection as to what the Self is by asking oneself 'Who am I? Though this was the last thing that he could think of, Baba made him take that very step. After seeing his own *punya purusha*, Kasinath asked Baba, 'If this figure is my *punya purusha* and the other figure that you destroyed was my *papa purusha*. who am I?' Baba's answer was, 'You are beyond these two, beyond *punya* and *papa*. That which constitutes me constitutes you. That is, you are myself. This is a combination of *Aham Brahmasmi, Tatvamasī, and Prajñanam Brahma and Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*. There is only one thing in existence, and that is Sat. That is the Parabrahman, Tatvamasī, 'You are That', Aham Brahmasmi, That Brahman I am. So, what constitutes you, namely, Jnanam and Brahman, constitutes me. So, there is no difference between you and me'. This express teaching is found even in Srimad Bhagavata SK.IV-28-60 *Parapurāṇanhyā Upākhyāna*. The Universal Soul or Parabrahman thus addressed the individual soul.

Aham bhavan nachanyas tarn

Tvam eva aham vichakshva bhoh

Na now pascyanti kavayah chidram jaatu maanakapi.

That is, I am You. You are not different from me, Yourself only I am. See it. The wise do not look on us as different. Even a jot of difference they do not see'.

This truth was flashed across Kasinath's mind for a moment and then it disappeared. Kasinath continued for very many years, that is, till about 1935, to think on purely dualistic lines and realistic lines. The idea of all personalities being one, or losing one's personality in the Absolute by yoga practice, appeared to him to be totally wrong and unwarranted, and it is only after 1935 by Sai's grace, he took to Ashtavakra Gita study and accepted wholeheartedly the doctrine of the Absolute as put forward therein and by Sankara. Sainath himself said to Advaitins, 'Search the Sastras and see whether the Atman is one or many', (B.C. and S. III and 125). But at that time during Kasinath's Shirdi stay, this truth made no impression upon Kasinath. These are some of the elements that go to make up Kasinath's new personality which was being evolved out of his personality by Sai's invisible process. Sai gave also some oral and express instructions which were useful to his pupil and were also useful to others. So we may proceed to set them out with more confidence than when we deal with invisible operations.

Sri Sai declared himself to be the one Iswara, the Antaryami of all and, therefore, he wanted his best pupils to realise him as their Ishta Devata or God First and next find him and feel him in every creature that they met. The Bhagavad Gita says in Chapter VII that Brahman has two forms; the entire Universe or *Apara prakriti* is one, and that which is beyond the Universe, *Para*, is the other. The manifest and the unmanifest are the two forms of Brahman. Unless a person feels that his God is in every manifestation in the Universe, he has not understood God fully. (*Samagram* - BG.(VII)!; see SB. III SK.(29) 16,27,34) So, God being divine and the invisible power that now appears visible as everything in the Universe, one has, in order to arrive at a perfect understanding of his Iswara to realise one's Iswara in everything. This is not easy at all. Sai Baba declared that his own Guru helped him over the stile in this matter. Baba said, 'My Morshad (Guru) has taken me away from this (pointing to his body); that is, his Guru helped him to see and feel that the body was not he,

¹⁷but that he was the one force which was responsible for manifesting itself as everything in the Universe. If you are not your body, and I am not my body, it is easy to infer that you and I are the same, the difference being caused only by our bodies and not by our real nature.

To Kasinath as to most of us this was a very, very, tough lesson that all souls are one and the same, that Iswara or the Guru God was, and is, in all and was and is All. Yet Baba determined to teach, him this lesson. So, even in the first year of his probation, Baba taught him some portion of this truth. Kasinath was cooking his food at Khandoba temple, and naturally wanted to take the food to his Guru Sai Baba, and to get back the same or rather part of it as prasad from him to eat. But while he was cooking his food, a black dog was watching, and even when he took the food towards Sai's Masjid, it followed him part of the way and suddenly disappeared. When first the dog was present and anxiously looking for the food, Upasani with his orthodox ideas thought it would be absurd to give that low creature, a dog, any food before offering it to God and before men ate (for that was against orthodox ideas). So he did not give any food to that dog. But when he went in the hot sun at noon, with his food to Sai Baba, Baba asked him, 'What have you come for?' Kasinath said. 'To bring you my naivedya', 'Why did you come all the way here in the sun? I was there' Baba said. Kasinath said that there was none but a black dog there. Baba said 'I was that black dog. So, as you refused to give me food there, I am not going to take this food'. So, Upasani returned that day bitterly repenting his orthodox frame of mind refusing to give food first to the dog. Next day, he was determined to avoid that mistake. So, when he was cooking his food, he looked out for the black dog but found no dog. Then, when he was proceeding with his cooking, he noticed that a sickly Sudra was leaning against a wall and watching the cooking. To the orthodox mind of

¹⁷ Sri Sai helped his Sishya Kasinath in many ways to see that he (Kasinath) was not his body. He showed him the previous Janmas, the various bodies his self had inhabited. So he was none of those bodies, and neither the Papa Purusha nor his Punya Purusha. but distinct from them all.

the Brahmin Kasinath, it was *drishii dosha* and improper for a Sudra to look on when a Brahmin was cooking. So he said, 'Get away', and accordingly, the Sudra left. When that day Kasinath came near Baba with his food, Baba was very angry. He said, 'Yesterday, you did not give me food, and today you told me to go away.' 'Where were you, Baba?' asked Kasinath. Baba said, 'I was leaning against that wall'. 'Could it be you, that sickly Sudra?' Kasinath asked. 'Yes, I am in everything and beyond', said Sai Baba in words reminiscent of Purusha Sukta mantra of the Rig Veda, "*Sa Bhumim Visvato Avritva Atyatishtat Dascangulam.*" "This means. That Purusha (or God) having pervaded all the world, exceeded it, and went ten inches beyond it." That is, Iswara is both immanent and transcendent. This truth came out of Sai Baba's mouth to Upasani. Just as he told other bhaktas that he was in the pig or dog that they fed or failed to feed, similarly he told Upasani that he was in the man or dog that he neglected to feed. The advice given by him was '*See me in all creatures*'. 'Me' means Baba. whom one is bound to worship on account of His great powers, good heart, and venerable position — Vide Upasani's words "*Aneka ascruta utarkya lila vilasaih samavishkrita iscana bhasvat prabhavam*" i.e. Sainatha who reveals his God hood by many, unheard of, and unimaginable miracles, etc. How can you conceive of Baba being in a dog or a sickly Sudra? They have not Baba's powers or nature. This was the great problem for Kasinath as for many others also. But yet, Baba's grace impressed the lesson on him. Though it looks so absurd at the beginning to believe that everything is really God, still by impressing it upon yourself with humility and faith, you can begin to feel that every object is your Sai Baba and that you must treat it with as much reverence, affection and sympathy as you can. For the Bhagavata. *Manasa Etani Bhutani Pranamet Eahumaanayan iswaro jivakalaya - SB III (29) 34; Pravishto Bhagavan hi. SB III (29) 27 says 'Athamaam sarva bhuteshu bhutatmanam kritalayam arhayet danamanabhyam maitriya abhmnena chakshusha, i.e.* Kapila (God's Avatar) tells Devahuti that He (as God) should be felt to be in all creatures and they are given respect, gifts and love on the basis of non-difference. Next he says, "Make mental obeisance to every creature, with

this idea in your mind i.e., Iswara (the Universal Force or Bhagavan) with a fraction of his powers has entered each creature". That is, the Universal is found in each particular. The root cause or origin is in each being. In another part of Bhagavata, Siva mentions how he bows to persons.

Pratyudgama prascrayana abhivadanam

Vidheeyate saadhumithah sumadhyame

Praajnaiah parasmai purushaya chetasa

Guhaascayaaya eva na deha manine 22

Satvam viscuddham vasudeva scabditam

Yadeeyate tatra epuman apaavritah

Satve cha tasmin bhagawan vaasudevo

Hyadhokshajo me manasa vidhiyate 23

Srimad Bhagavata-IV (3)-22-23

This means "O Parvati, when wise ones go out to greet, bow and prostrate to each other, in their hearts, they do these to the Supreme, the great one, the *Para Purusha* dwelling in the heart and not to the man who thinks himself to be his body. In the pure *Satva Guna* called Vasudeva, there is the Soul or Purusha. i.e. personal God. In that Satwa, my mind pictures Bhagawan Vasudeva or God". Siva in effect advises us thus; 'Mentally fancy that God is inside each being and make your mental pranams to that being or person'.

So various devotees of Sai Baba like Kasinath have been directed by him to adopt this process of mentally conceiving Sainath as being inside each creature they meet. For instance, a young man went out at night and under a tree saw an evil spirit, or ghost, and hastily returned. Baba the next day asked him what he saw. The young man answered, 'I saw an evil spirit'. Baba said, 'No, It was I'. The person answered again that he saw an evil spirit. Then Baba said. 'Go to your mother and ask her'. The man went to his mother, and she told him that Baba (being God) is in every creature, evil spirit or good spirit, and, therefore, 'Baba wants you to remember that He is in everything and that you need not fear anything.' Similarly, when Baba passed away from his body in 1918, Lakshmi was praying, 'Baba, should you not show yourself to me?' and

came out in the dark from the Mosque. On her way, there was a snake. At once she said, 'Baba, if you come to me in this form of a snake, what am I to do?' In spite of the terrible form of the snake, she was able to picture Baba within the snake and prayed to it. This is the practice commended by Baba even to those who are at the lowest rung of the ladder. Those who are capable of achieving the highest aim find "that Baba's advice or lesson is far more patent and easily achieved by yogic means. If you dip yourself by laya in God constantly, then you feel that you are part and parcel of God— BG XI (9) 22-23. Similarly everything is part and parcel of God¹⁸. The dog, the snake, and everything is a manifestation of that sacred force which you call your God, and, if so realised, it will really react on you like God. Stand still before a snake. Worship it as God, and it will not bite you. Stand before an evil spirit, and say: 'Thou an Brahman'. The evil spirit will not harm you. The very moment you are thinking that everything is God, your spirit is part of God, you cease to be your body and no harm can befall you. This is the most valuable teaching and training that Baba gave under this heading of Cosmic feeling of Godhood.

The second great reason for giving prominence to Upasani Baba in a life of Sai Baba is the indirect service that he has rendered to the SAI cause and movement. Though the service is indirect, the number of persons reached and the amount of benefit conferred in respect of the whole movement by it make it as good as the first service. The indirect service of Upasani Baba is his being the cause or the occasion of this present author being drawn to Sai Baba just at the time when there was the danger of his frittering away his energies in all sorts of pilgrimages, studies, and lectures and never reaching personal contact with God in the form of the Gurudeva SAI. A fuller account of the same may be given later on in a different chapter. But at present it is enough to mention that B.V.N. Swami was one of the foremost in the ranks of lawyers and political agitators, legislative councillors and Home Rule workers, when suddenly it pleased Providence to draw him away from all these by what appeared to be a terrible

¹⁸ Cf. Sarvam Khaluidam Brahma ChU (3)14 (cf.SB XI (17), 32, 35 Sarvabhuteshu maam param; Madbhavah sarvabhuteshu.

domestic calamity. In 1921, he had a sad bereavement by the loss of two of his children at one stroke through their accidental drowning. The blow was very severe but the giver of the blow, who is no other than Iswara and, therefore, no other than Sai Baba, intended everything to have a special beneficial effect both to the person on whom the blow appeared to be inflicted and to the public. Swami who was then a grihasta, and a political agitator, was drawn away from all this by the blow and he was, when in full possession of the powers of body and mind, made to use them for the largest spiritual purposes. Agitation for Home Rule for India and asserting the rights of the people in the Legislative Council and outside was no doubt service to the public. But the scope for effective work in all those directions was very limited, and there were other workers coming into the field with much greater energy and much better chance of turning out results. Therefore just at that time this author by his resolve not to take any further part in worldly affairs including political affairs was rightly drawn on to the religious and spiritual field. Even before the bodies of the children were taken out from water it had dawned upon him that this dreadful thunderstroke had a meaning and that Providence was directing him thereby not to use up his energies and attention in Law or politics and social or domestic affairs but to consecrate himself for the service of mankind by the search for God and the ascertainment and adoption of steps for realisation of God and the self. These were at first very indistinctly perceived, especially the goal, but there was no mistaking the fact that they were in a direction totally different from the direction till then pursued by the author. Hence, after a resolution to make a tyaga or absolute renunciation of everything he was till then connected with, and to lead a secluded or consecrated life, he took the immediate step of cutting short all his previous connections. In 1925, he returned his Vakil Sanad to the High Court, having long ago resigned his connection with the Legislative Council and politics and released his interests in property, and resolved not to attend to any political affairs or other controversial affairs, but to develop his bhakti. And after completing his efforts for rebuilding and equipping the Lakshminarayana temple at Salem, he left home and grihasthrama and proceeded to seek the direction of his family Acharya and

other Gurus or elders. Being advised to resort to the Sage of Arunachala, he spent three years there and led a life of cloistral seclusion concentrating all his efforts on the study of Vedanta works and adoption of the necessary consequential steps. He there wrote the life of Ramana Maharishi and at the close of three years discovered that he had lost the bhakti in which he had made good progress before leaving Salem and approaching Ramanashram. Hence in 1930-31, he resumed his efforts at readoption of the Bhakti marga and in quest thereof was going to visit various temples, shrines and holy places such as Pandharpur, Nasik, etc. While staying at Nasik, he contacted Meher Baba, the pupil of Upasani Baba and being advised by the former's followers, proceeded to contact Sri Upasani Baba. Sri Upasani Baba made him stick to the bhakti marga (without filtering away his powers in metaphysical speculation) and develop his knowledge and tendencies through well recognised methods such as japa, bhajan, parayana or Pothi, etc., and the leading of the *Akinchana's* life (i.e., life of holy poverty or asceticism). When trying to progress on these lines with the help of Upasani Baba, he was startled to discover that there were elements in that Baba's teaching and methods which jarred very much against his previous opinions and expectations as to the correct religious life and so he left Sri Upasani about the beginning of 1933 with the idea of never returning to him. He then went back to Madras and was planning to visit holy places including Dwaraka. While he was in this frame of mind, Sri Upasani was saying at Sakori, 'Where will this Madras Swami go? I shall draw him back again here'. He said this to the Ashramites there long before Swami approached or thought of approaching that Ashram again. In fact Swami never wanted to approach that Ashram as he was under the impression that it would never suit him and that he had better be elsewhere. But this powerful *akarshana* of Upasani Baba was quite as powerful as that of Sri Sai Baba when directed against Upasani himself in June or July 1911 as described already. In the case of this author, an exactly similar thing had taken place. When Sri Upasani was saying to his dependants that this author would go back, the latter had no idea that Sri Upasani had said so, and in any case had no idea of going back to him. On the other hand he

wished to visit holy places and began with Siddharudha's Mutt in Hubli, Pandharpur, etc. Strangely enough his commiseration for a poor devotee in trouble at Hubli made him promise to help that devotee to get some place for a fixed habitation and adoption of a purely religious life of service. Step after step along with that devotee this author went on from Hubli to Pandharpur, thence to Khedgaonbet (i.e. Narayanbet), then again from Narayanbet to Sakori. The only safe place for that devotee seemed to be Sakori and being informed that Sri Upasani Maharaj was not at Sakori, the author agreed to take that devotee to Sakori, intending to proceed immediately thereafter to Dwaraka, without meeting Upasani Baba.

With that mentality, having gone to Sakori, the author was greatly surprised to note that Sri Upasani was there. In any case, having abundance of regard for the merits of Upasani Baba in spite of the defect that seemed to hamper those merits, the author bowed to Sri Upasani Baba and wished to leave Sakori. Just at that time, the devotee mentioned above came running back and said that Upasani Baba would not allow that devotee to remain there. So the author was obliged to meet Upasani Baba and in the course of the conversation, he resolved to give up his tour programme and adopt the advice of Upasani Baba that stay at one place, for instance, Sakori, and the adoption of strenuous religious practice, was the thing absolutely necessary in his own case, for, as the saying goes, 'Rolling stones gather no moss.' As the author stayed at Sakori, that devotee also was allowed to stay at Sakori, and after the author arrived at that determination, the dependents of Upasani Baba mentioned that long ago Sri Upasani Baba had declared that the 'Madras Swami' would be drawn back to Sakori. The author's surprise was as great as Upasani's surprise at being drawn back to Shirdi in 1911.

Thereafter for a number of years, the author stayed at Sakori and went on studying both Upasani Baba and Sri Sai Baba, the latter being the Guru of Upasani and the latter's place being only three miles distant, an easy walk from Sakori. The author slowly gathered information and went on with his research about Sai Baba and noted that it was Sai Baba after all that was drawing him

through Upasani Baba and that, in one form or another, he had been drawing him for decades, all unknown to him (the author). Thereafter the completion of the work of research about Sai Baba and the fuller development of strong one-pointed bhakti towards Sai resulted in a perfect surrender to him to complete the above process. Till that time, this author never knew what it was to surrender and what it was to banish his ego. He had been touring and touring and seeing hundreds of saints and never staying with any except a very few. But none of the saints he saw could put down his ego and make him surrender. It was the unseen Sai Baba acting at first through the seen Upasani Baba that enabled him to approach him with an effort to surrender, and the surrender also was an increasingly manifested principle as years went on in the life of this author. The fullest surrender comes only when everything including the ground underneath one's feet is cut away. That occurred to the author in 1953 and once again what looked like a calamity as great as, if not greater than the calamity of 1921, proved to be the turning point of his spiritual life. It demonstrated and impressed indelibly on the author the truth of Sai's saying that he gives everything to him who surrenders everything to Him. That is, He looks to the devotee who looks solely to Him, of course, with '*ananya chinta*', with perfect and complete confidence and reliance.

Therefore this second mishap or thunderclap of 1953 was essential to develop the personality of the author and to make him produce this present work extending over a thousand pages in fulfillment of a resolve or vow that he had long ago made (to present a full and up to-date scientific or modern sketch of Sai Baba to the world) but which for some reason or other he could never accomplish. It was Upasani that drew him out of his distracting currents and fixed him on to Sai Baba. Without that, so many years or decades of work in Sai literature and Sai devotion and so many efforts to spread Sai faith throughout the length and breadth of this country by 600 or 700 lectures all over India in incessant tours and publication of innumerable pamphlets, books and journals could not be accomplished. Even now the movement which had overflowed the limits of Maharashtra is markedly the result of Sri Upasani's attracting this author.

And if toady Sai movement has far overflowed its original banks and promises to reach the farthest corners of the country if not of humanity through the latest works like the present work, Sri Upasani must be given much of the credit for this result. That is why the second aspect of Upasani's influence has been stressed here and he is given a prominent place though not in the strict chronological order of the Apostles of Baba that have spread his faith.

So far we have picked out what looks like apparently disconnected bits as constituting Upasani's life or rather its moulding by Sri Sai Baba. An attempt to take a fuller or more complete view of Upasani Baba's life as it was in June 1911 when he came to Baba, and the shape it took during his Shirdi stay and the further shaping after he left Shirdi, would no doubt complete the picture and would prove very interesting reading even from a general humanitarian standpoint or the standpoint of the moralist and the psychologist. But apart from the difficulty of securing the material therefor, there are further difficulties standing in the way of this author. One misfortune that befell this author in his dealings with saint after saint till he reached Sai Baba was that though he was trying to understand saints and write their lives, he was not writing them out from the viewpoint that was and is best for himself and for the public, namely, the viewpoint of a bhakta or of a pupil or of an admirer of a beautiful structure being built.

On the other hand, he was taking an unconcerned stranger's critical view, sometimes perhaps too critical a view, and sometimes perhaps it was too threadbare and tattered bits of criticism. That was his reading and writing of saints till he came to Sai Baba. The misfortune that befell him was that aptly described by one of the saints whose life this author had written. That saint said, 'What! Criticism?' [referring to his (saint's) own life]. That showed how the saint disapproved the idea of the intrusion of the critical spirit in the writing of a saint's biography. The net result also was unsatisfactory to practically every one concerned. One therefore appreciates the modified form of the same advice given by Sai Baba in the writing of his biography. Sai Baba said that there ought not to be the spirit of aggressive egotism, the spirit of controversy, defending a

position and assailing other positions, and that the biography should consist only of a detailed description of facts that help one in one's spiritual development, and the truths dealt with by the saint, the way he lived, the way he put them before his pupils, and the attendant circumstances calculated to enhance the value of the advice or its power. So, that is the spirit in which this author has attempted to write out this biography, and it is difficult to deal with Sri Upasani Baba's history from June 1911 up to the end of his term of life or up-to-date in a manner that would satisfy the devotees of Upasani Baba and other religious students. When unfortunately events happen in the life of a saint that interfere with the main line of development sketched out by a great spirit that took charge of that saint, the life seems to crumble or get distorted, and the author feels very much distressed to have to describe the apparent crumbling or the shattering of hopes. Yet the spirit of truth has to be adhered to. We must all remember the golden advice in the stanza:-

*Satyam bruyat priyam bruyat na bruyat satyam apriyam
Priyamcha na anrutam bruyat esha dharmah sanatanah*

This means 'Speak the truth. Speak the pleasant. Do not utter the truth that is unpleasant nor utter the sweet words that lack truth (like flattery). This is a permanent rule'. Therefore, the truth has to be told wherever possible in the least offensive manner so as to produce the least harm. Keeping this in mind, we shall proceed next to note what were the main teachings or pushes given to Sri Upasani Maharaj by Sai Baba, what the results were, and what explanations can be offered for the variation between the original intention of Baba and the final development.

Sri Upasani Baba when he came to Shirdi in June. 1911 came only as a grihasta but in such a broken-down condition and in such a mood as to warrant his giving up that ashrama and developing into a *virakia sanvasi* or an *avadhuta* working entirely as a man of God for the benefit of humanity That is just what Sai Baba intended to make of him. He came as an *Artha* one suffering from one trouble or another or a number of troubles, and it is such a person that can be made use of for higher religious purposes. Sri Upasani Baba himself acted on

this principle at his own Sakori Mutt, and when people came in extreme distress such as recent loss of a husband, he gave the advice, 'Convert this bitter sorrow into something sweet'. The lady to whom this was uttered by Upasani Baba was shocked, but that is the truth of what Upasani Baba did in many cases and what Sai Baba also did in numerous cases. It is all right to help a man out of worldly trouble and get him into worldly happiness wherever that is possible. But where that is not possible, the next best thing is to give up the idea of worldly betterment or at least complete worldly betterment and recognise the fact that human beings are not born merely for perfect worldly enjoyment and comfort, that life has some higher aim even from the individual standpoint, that from the social standpoint a few suffering souls must be made to suffer for the benefit of humanity, that persons must rise in the spiritual scale through suffering and higher perceptions and make of themselves something superhuman, something divine, and that the ego has to be crucified so that the divine may be raised out of it. The divine force will work such wonders not merely from the standpoint of siddhi but also from the standpoint of moral and spiritual improvement of the world. This has been the ideal on which Baba's Guru trained him and Baba himself tried to train several people, one of whom was Sri Upasani Baba. Others who came to Baba were sought to be improved mainly from their own individual standpoint, though incidentally their individual improvement tended to help others in their improvement. But in the case of Upasani, the improvement was clearly stated to be to make a Samartha Sadguru out of him so that he might benefit mankind. So, let us see how far in this aim efforts were made by Baba, and in what way, and what became of his efforts.

First let us take one item. A Samartha Sadguru is generally one unconnected with family and unfettered by any burdens. Sri Sai is the best example; he had no relations whatever when establishing himself as Samartha Sadguru; no father, no mother, no brother, no sister, no children, no wife, no relation of any sort. A person devoid of relations may be thought to become unfit for human sympathies and love, and relationships are considered to be the best fields for developing human sympathy and human love. Family ties being excellent means for

propagating love, the love of the child and the love of the mother are excellent means for, if not archetypes of man's love to God and God's love to man. If a man can love everybody that he sees with the same love which he extends towards his own dear children, then indeed his condition is grand and the world is happy. Therefore, the aim for saints has been to treat the growth of family love as the basis for the development of further love which should be expanded within limit. One ought to have, no doubt, some experience of love of sister, brother, mother, etc., but the love should not be circumscribed within the narrow limits of a family circle. To a person who has a world-wide mission or at least a wish to have a large scale of spiritual activities, any concentration of affection on close relations is ruinous. That is why a wife is not allowed in most systems to a sanyasi. In some systems no doubt they allow it. But Sai Baba's ideal seems to be that of the majority of the Hindus that a wife is a fetter upon a sanyasi and that relations with women, apart from the general relation which one has to all women in society, are ruinous. This is the idea found in Srimad Bhagavata, Ekadasa Skanda, Ch.(14) 26 and Chapter XVIII, 20 and Ch. (26) 22 and 24 where it is pointed out that a sanyasi should avoid contact with women and should develop himself in seclusion. That is the reason why Sai Baba when welcoming and almost confining Upasani to Shirdi kept him away from his third wife, who was at Satana, 80 miles off, longing to see her husband. Baba did not allow him to go back to Satana, though he was very anxious to go back to his wife and mother or bring his wife to live with him at Shirdi. Baba had prescribed to him the course mentioned in SB XI (14) 29:— *"streenam stree sanginaam sangam tyaktva durata aimavan, Ksheme Vivikta aaseenas chintayen maamatandritah"*, i.e. "the self-controlled person should keep away from the company of women and those fond of women, sit in seclusion and ever concentrate on ME (the Lord)." The wife and mother relations are all good, but one must begin to feel that every woman is one's mother or sister. This is the general feeling everywhere amongst saints. The Palestine Samartha Jesus found the existence of relations a stumbling block to his fellow townsmen who said 'Is not this the son of a carpenter and are not his brothers and sisters with us?' and who therefore could not believe, that he had a

heavenly mission. When he was told that his mother, sister, and brother were approaching,

48. he answered and said unto him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, behold my mother and my brethren!

50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.

(St. Mathew, Chapter XII, verses 48-50)

Here evidently Jesus considered even the usual affection for a sister and mother to be a powerful fetter interfering with one's loving relations and duties towards all. Jesus was unmarried and if there was a wife, he would have expressed the same views even in stronger terms about a wife for a person having a mission towards the world, for a wife would interfere with that mission. This is the feeling of Sai Baba and other saints. Srimad Bhaga-vata says a wife and others block the way and stop a man from going into sanyasa. XI (18), 14 says that 'The gods, who are jealous of the progress of the sadhaka who might rise above their position, work through his wife and other relations and stand in the way of the sadhaka's spiritual progress'. Sri Sai definitely told Sri Upasani that there was nothing for him to go back to Satana and that he must remain at Shirdi for four years with him. This was felt to be a bitter sentence of internment or exile by Sri Upasani Maharaj for he felt that he was still a grihasta. His thoughts, ideals, and nature had not changed. His views and his feelings and sentiments at Shirdi were the same as those he had before he came to Shirdi. Baba's intention was to effect a change even in these feelings, Baba knew that the strongest tie to his wife (in this case his third wife) must be cut off and would be cut off even by her Karma. In the beginning of 1912, that lady was to die and when a letter came to Upasani Maharaj that she was seriously unwell, Maharaj took it to Sai Baba and asked for permission to go. Sai Baba refused permission and told him. 'You had better remain; you can do nothing there'. A week later, a letter came announcing the death of that wife. The blow to Upasani was terrible.

He thought that life was useless without his wife. His own idea was that when he accomplished greatness with the help of Sai Baba, he would use his great position for having a happy life along with his wife. That was his confirmed opinion, which he mentioned on receipt of the news of his wife's death. He said, 'Now that the wife is dead, what is the good of remaining here at Shirdi, because the wife, who was to share the glories and joys of sainthood, has gone.' She was a congenial spirit that shared with him his *yogabhyasa* at Omkaralingam.

Such being the notions of Upasani Baba, Sai Baba had much uphill work to change his ideas and see that the natural tendency for the male to consort with the female, seek her company and revel in it, as the main joyous portion of one's life was wiped out in Upasani's case. Sai Baba is the highest power known to us that can effect such a change. From what has already been stated in this chapter, one would see what great success he achieved through visions and in other ways. But there seems to be a certain limit to the success achieved in transforming a sadhaka into a perfect siddha. It may be that some sadhakas are like curly hair which however much one may straighten out would again curl up. Anyhow, in the case of Sri Upasani, Sai Baba tried to keep out woman's contact with him as long as he was at Shirdi. Upasani's third wife died. No other marriage connection was then possible. Then what Baba expected was that after four years of novitiate under him at the Khandoba temple were over, Upasani would develop into a perfect Samartha, a Guru-God, for all persons and that Shama would bring him out from his solitude in Khandoba temple to a public place so that all may worship him as the patent perfection of Divinity. But this consummation was somehow not to be. It was prevented in various ways. The solitude itself was oppressive. The older tendencies though being snuffed out could not be snuffed out completely. A little remaining spark is enough to restart a flame and destroy a forest.

After three years of novitiate, during which there was daily, hourly, or even perpetual contact, seen and unseen, with Baba, Upasani cut himself away at midnight of 25-7-1914 and went away to Scinde, Nagpur, and Khargpur, many hundreds of miles away. Miles do not form by themselves a hindrance to the

operation of a great power like Sai Baba. But the surroundings there are totally different from Shirdi surroundings and act in a totally different and opposite way. The tendency to self-assertion, the development of the ego, and of other unwanted but deep-rooted tendencies would go on apace in all those places and the perpetual contact with Sai Baba would not be available there to check those unfortunate developments. So the result was that what Sai Baba intended was realised only in part and not fully. A tree grew from the seed sown, but it did not shoot up in the way in which such a tree ought to shoot up. On the other hand it had a bend and a bent of its own. Sri Upasani's older tendencies, idiosyncracies and ideas, though modified by what he picked up at Shirdi, were remoulding him and the result was to develop a Upasani Baba working on lines reminiscent of Shirdi but in directions totally different from Sai Baba's.

Let us take the present matter of family connections as one instance. Upasani Baba for a series of years was leading the life of a lonely *avadhuta* away from his family, and he began to exhibit some powers and was regarded as a notable pupil of Sai Baba. His moral tales like some of the tales of Sai Baba carried great influence with them and made people feel that they were in the presence of a moral power. Some siddhis began to shoot out of him, e.g. mind reading, mind control, clairvoyance, psychic healing etc.. and these added to the respect which people had for a saintly looking *avadut* (for he was perfectly naked except for a gunny bag covering him). Then his worship grew apace. So long as he observed Sai Baba's directions and example of keeping away from women and wealth and avoidance of storing either women or wealth by his side, his influence and power for good were notably increasing. By about 1927 or 1928 one might see that these reached great heights though signs were not wanting to show that contrary tendencies were beginning to work and to undermine the foundations laid by Sai Baba. In time these contrary tendencies fully developed and wealth (counted in lakhs and taking the shape of loans, 80 acres of land, massive buildings, and hundreds of cattle) was stored up and women were stored up. It does not matter in whose name the wealth was stored up. There was the feeling in Upasani Maharaj and in those surrounding him that he was the owner of this wealth,

which is exactly the view of the Government which levied income tax, etc. on him. The noticeable point is that so long as he was scattering away wealth as Sai Baba did as soon as it came, that is, till about 1925 or 1926, his popularity was unbounded. He had no enemies.

Yasman na udvijate lokah lokat na udvijate cha yah

Harsha amarsha bhaya udvegaih mukto yah sa cha me priyah.

(B.C. Ch. XII, 15).

This means, 'He who is not repulsive to the world and who does not feel it repulsive, a person free from the ebullition of joy, anger, etc, is dear to me', says Sri Krishna. Till that period, like Sai Baba (who had no friends nor foes), Upasani Maharaj also had no friends nor foes, or rather every one was his friend. But as soon as he stopped distributing all the things that came to him and began hoarding or piling them up and investing them, began trouble then i.e. animosities, jealousies, etc.¹⁹ Thereupon began a sense of ownership of properties evidenced by numerous benami transactions and execution of testamentary or other documents and a declaration that in the temple he had built no Harijan should enter. Then the idea also of keeping a band of women next to him as his close associates began to develop. During the novitiate at Shirdi, Sai Baba tried to take away the one wife he had. But Upasani had later on twentyfive wives, a regular harem with a castle and an *Antahpuram* in it. The results are most noticeable. Sai Baba after leaving his fleshy body is not dead but is still taking active interest in the welfare of thousands and is the friend and father of all. Sri Upasani passed away in 1941, and thereafter the general public are not feeling that he is still existing and serviceable to them. Even before he passed away, the antagonism between him and various classes and the way in which he had to figure in courts as witness or as accused or party shattered all chances of his leading a pure Sai Baba sort of life. He went on accumulating the

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- ¹⁹ SBXI(8) 11 and 12. *Na sangrinhita Bhikshukuh Makshikali iva saiigrmluin Saiia tenu Viriascyati*, i.e. The ascetic should not hoard. If like the honey bee he hoards, the hoard and self will perish.

number of his wives, now by one process and now by another, first by marrying people to Krishna images and, when that was stopped by a special Act of the Bombay Legislative Council, next by marrying heaps of women to himself, an act which is now prevented by the Hindu Code or the Anti-Polygamy Act. Thus Sri Upasani's acts even during his life tended to decrease his popularity and strengthen the Divekar agitation. About 1926, Upasani's following or admirers could be counted in tens of thousands. Divekar began his agitation in 1934 and carried on his agitation through Kirloskar magazine and Court proceedings till 1936. Before it was even half way up, the entire tens of thousands evaporated. It was difficult to find even a thousand people enthusiastic over Upasani Baba. People felt ashamed to say that they had anything to do with Upasani Baba. All that became possible only because the great aims and standards set up by Sai Baba of having nothing to do with wealth or women had been abandoned.

In the earlier years of the third decade of this century (20th), praises of Sri Upasani Baba were sung alike by those of the Sai Sansthan at Shirdi and by others. In the classic Sai Satcharitra of Dabolkar (Hemad Pant) in ch 44, 122, "*Bhakta Sereshta*" Upasani (i.e. the eminent devotee) is mentioned as performing at Kasi the annual *sraddha* ceremony for Sai Baba; further reference is made to his doing *pratishta* of Baba's Paduka in 1912 at the foot of the Gode Neem tree. Sri Nilakantha in Sai Lila Mask II (1) said in 1924 that Sainath was great because he made a saint of Upasani. People then believed that Sri Upasani was a saint of the type of Sri Ramadas and Sri Sai Baba; and there were powers (siddhas) shooting out of him off and on which justified the hope that in due course he would be in full possession of the innumerable and practically endless armoury of siddhis which were always at the disposal of Sri Sai Baba and which, according to Bhagavata, skanda XI, Chapter XV, any one intensely concentrating upon Iswara can and often does get. The question of possession of powers by saints has to be dealt with in a special chapter by itself, but it may be mentioned here that Sri Upasani Baba himself in his Mahimna Stotra, which is daily recited in the worship of Sai Baba, refers to Sai Baba's

divine personality being revealed by the marvellous lilas (i.e. siddhis, etc.) which he performed.

Aneka ascntta alarkia lila vilasaih

Samavishkrita Iscana bhasvat prabhavam.

This means, 'Sai Baba whose brilliant divine nature glowed through the innumerable, unheard of, unfathomable miraculous deeds'. This was evidently referring to Sai's lilas of which hundreds or even thousands can be traced now in Sai literature alike as happening during his life time and after he left his body. Here the inference of divinity from the possession of superhuman powers is most natural and even based upon scriptural texts. The Chandogya Upanishad mentions the eight special siddhis which appertain to Godhead and this is stressed in Bhagavata, Skanda XI, Chapter XV. The latter adds that a complete possession of these 8 siddhis belongs only to God, that sants and sadhus have only imperfect or incomplete mastery over them, and that the accomplishment of the remaining siddhis (about 18 in number) may be achieved by ordinary persons who have not reached divinity of nature. In the case of Sri Upasani, stray instances were forthcoming of his ability to read the hearts of others and to control disease or foretell mishap or good fortune etc. in several circumstances. These lent some support to the belief that in due course he would arrive at the full perfection that people noticed in Sri Sai Baba.

Sri Sai himself once declared to a questioner who asked him, 'Baba, are your powers to die with you or will there be any successor?' (According to Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe who made this statement to this author), 'Arre, will there not be some man coming in tatters?' This was long before 1911. In June 1911 Kasinath Upasani Maharaj came in tatters and Sri Sai Baba fixed him up for four years, novitiate under him to be spent in solitude at Khandoba temple, after which period Baba stated that Sri Upasani would be in full possession of God's powers and that Shama would drag him out of his solitude and place him as an object of worship, as God should be worshipped (by all). Baba even mentioned that he was making a gold plate grant of all his powers to this Upasani Maharaj. Many people, therefore, were hoping and believing that Sri Upasani Maharaj

would become a full-blown Samartha Sadguru and take the place of Sai Baba to serve devotees, old and new. But this was impliedly (or even expressly) conditioned by Upasani's stay for four years under the direct control and in perpetual contact with Sai Baba at Shirdi. As fate would have it, or as perhaps Sri Upasani would have it, this condition was not fulfilled. After three years of novitiate, Sri Upasani having cut himself away, the prospect of his attaining full Samarthaship under Baba and continuing his mission, especially from his stay at Shirdi, was shattered. One may ask whether Baba could not mould him when Upasani went to Scinde, Nagpur, Kharagpur or Sakori. No doubt that may be a possibility. But we are not here to discuss possibilities. We have to discuss what actually happened and whether the novitiate continued even after Upasani's cutting himself away from direct and perpetual contact with Sai.

As for difficulties of continuing the novitiate, one thing is patent. At Shirdi there was perpetual control and perpetual concentration on Sai preventing one's running away on one's own lines and developing egotism and other allied harmful tendencies. At Scinde, Nagpur, and Khargpur, the scope for developing one's own tendencies and running into one's own and even harmful lines was very great. In fact it was a lapse back again into old lines of thought and one may notice after going through all this vast mass of report of what Sri Upasani said and did at all these places and at Sakori that Sri Upasani had revolted against not merely the control of Sai but also against the line of thought and action pursued by Sai which line and action were no doubt invisible and rather ill-perceived by Sri Upasani. Nature tends to recur to old familiar lines and Sri Upasani was recovering his old lines of thought developed from his grandfather's house at Satana, i.e. the lines of thought of a village purohit considering that the main item in religion is the pursuit of observances, rituals, vows, mantras, yantras, etc. It is these that we find to be predominating in the Upasani literature that is now at our disposal. No doubt Sri Sai's influence also is seen to be intermixed with these writings, sayings, and views.

Upasani Baba has been holding the torch as high as he could to draw people away from mere worldliness of a low type, and turn them to God at least for

success of temporal ends and to aim as high as their circumstances would permit. But the main stress over and over again in Sri Upasani's lectures and writings is on the accomplishment of the various Purusharthas or goals of life (and notably on *saumangalya* and *success* or *wealth* etc.) through the methods recommended in numerous sastric works such as japa, tapas, dhyana, dana, vrata etc., on purely conventional lines. No doubt Sri Upasani's original genius is brought out here and there by his departure in method and technique from the old standards. Yet, on the whole, Sri Upasani at Sakori was practically continuing the work of his grandfather Gopala Sastri, an eminent purohit, highly learned in the various sastras and able to administer to the needs of his clients most of whom wanted only success, *saumangalya*, Lakshmi prasada etc. No doubt in the case of Sri Upasani there were additional powers based upon the inner working by Sri Sai Baba and upon his practice of solitary dhyana. etc., and upon the prestige he acquired as Sai's disciple, worshipped by the pujari of Sai Baba, namely, Bapu Saheb Jog, for a number of years, a fact which would impress most people with the idea that Sai was being continued (as Jog thought) in the personality of Sri Upasani. But any one who looked beneath the surface could easily discover that the main line of thought, action, and being of Sri Sai was clearly different from that of Sri Upasani. Sri Upasani was flying off from Sri Sai at a tangent in the matter of his thoughts and deeds. As stated already two glaring instances would show the marked difference between the two. Whereas Sai never tolerated the piling up of any wealth which could be thought to be his, Sri Upasani (after some years) did exactly the opposite. Whereas Sai Baba had no relations and no women to contact him, Sri Upasani worked exactly in the opposite direction. He was storing up groups of women to live with him; at first a batch of 5 and ultimately a batch of 25 were tacked on to him by ties of marriage. No doubt these marriages were explained by Upasani Baba as emblematic and holy and not as a case of Mormonism or of uxorious cravings of a wealthy householder or ruler. Anyhow these betray serious and glaring differences of views and policies.

Sri Sai Baba prescribed Ekadasa Skanda of Srimad Bhagavata for the study and practice of his devotees, and in that we find in Chapter XXVI, verses 22 and 24—

Athaapi na upasajjeta Streeshu straineshu cha anhavit (22)

Tasmat sango nakartavyah Streeshu straineshu cha indriaih

Vidushaam cha Api Aviscrabdha Shadvargah kimu

madruscaam (24)

This means, 'A man of discrimination should neither associate with women nor with those attached to them, and no association through the senses should be made with women or with those attached to them. The passions are not to be trusted (or tempted) even by the learned or wise'. Baba's dealing with Kaka Dixit during his vanaprastha probation was marked by his keeping him away from contact with women, and Baba's own example was the very best demonstration of the correctness of the principle. There was no woman associated with Baba and he tried to make those who were to occupy a position like his, if not his own position, adopt the above principles. That is why he prevented Sri Upasani from going back to Satana or even have his Satana wife brought to him at Shirdi, as prayed for by Sri Upasani. Upasani's ideas however were exactly opposite to and poles apart from Sal's. Even in 1937, when he made his speeches to admiring people, he mentioned that it was a great good for ardent devotees to donate their girls and women to sants; of course, he, Upasani himself undoubtedly was considered a sant. He has mentioned this times without number later on and his speeches and writings abound with such sentiments. Acting upon these declarations of Upasani, some devotees presented their wives to him and some (rather a large number) gave away their daughters to him in marriage so that they might live with him, and that is how he got such a large number as 25 wives or satis by the end of his career. In an earlier speech, he mentioned that hundreds of women would be offered to him. The rationale of the gift was expounded by him very ingeniously. He expounded a new and revolutionary doctrine that men could achieve their salvation through women (the very opposite of the Bhagavata specially SK III (31) 35 and SK XI (26)22 and 24, and other

orthodox scriptures). It was Sri Upasani's theory that women by nature were "*prarabdha rahita*" i.e., free from Karma or sin, whereas men by nature were full of Karma; and women, by avoiding active mingling with society and refusing to undertake responsibilities, would remain totally free from Karma and by their purity, they would raise their husbands and parents to Heaven.

This achievement of salvation by marrying kanyas was a favourite doctrine with Upasani and the Kanyasthan with its 25 kanyas wedded to him as satis (sati being the foamy adulterator of a saint) became the standing illustration of his doctrine. The question how these kanyas could achieve the salvation of any one by wedlock, is not easy to comprehend. In the case of Upasani himself, he did not require any wives to lift him to Heaven or Salvation, as he declared that he was God, and in the case of others it is not these kanyas whom they could not wed that could raise them to Heaven. The solution offered by Sri Upasani seems to be this. These kanyas by doing yajnas, yagas, and anushtanas, would accumulate such a heap of merit and constitute such brilliant examples as to induce other women to become like them, and being free from karma and marrying men, they would make the husbands also fit for Heaven by their own freedom from karma. These notions are very hard to comprehend and we are not aware of even a single case in which this ideal has been accomplished, though it is about 20 years since they were promulgated by Upasani Baba and acted upon by him.

However we are not here to criticise Sri Upasani or his theory or his actions. The above is mentioned with all due reverence to Sri Upasani merely to indicate that he went off at a tangent from the lines or ideals adopted by Sai and that his activities *pre-mortem* and *post-mortem* were not such as to justify the hopes once entertained by Sai Baba and others that he would continue Sai's mission and work on Sai's lines. This is not however to condemn Sri Upasani's life or activities or thoughts. He has led a noble life devoted to the cause of religion drawing many thousands of people away from materialism to the path of bhakti and many thousands have been benefited by him and led a religious life.

Again, in the matter of development of high powers of endurance and self control, Sri Upasani Maharaj advanced very far. as one more instance of which the following may be cited. In 1914 when he went to Scinde he suffered severely from piles and that necessitated an operation. The Civil surgeon who came to pull out cauterise and stitch the piles would do the same only after administering chloroform to the patient. But Sri Upasani declared that chloroform was unnecessary, and without it he underwent the painful operation calmly and without twitching and disturbing the surgeon, who was consequently so much impressed by Upasani's endurance as to prostrate himself to the Maharaj after the operation was over.

So there is much to admire in the conduct and work of Upasani and even in his utterances and writings whatever may be his own idiosyncracies of thought and action. However, we shall conclude this chapter by noting once again the fact that Sri Upasani did not develop completely on the lines expected from him during his Shirdi stay and his tutelage under Baba. He devolved on his own lines and built up his own ashram and left traditions and an institution with properties to work on certain lines chalked out by him in his will or other document executed at the closing period of his life. But whatever may be the merits of these need not (we repeat) be discussed here and no further mention of Upasani is called for here.

The author has given a pretty full sketch of his own ideas and appreciation of Sri Upasani in a separate book called, 'The Sage of Sakori' which he wrote and published in 1936. More mention of Sri Upasani would be necessary in a later chapter dealing with succession to Sai Baba. At present, it is sufficient to say that Sai's lines of thought and action and Sai's brilliant continuance of his personality up-to-date promising to continue it for ever, based upon his brilliant divine personality are not to be found in Sri Upasani so far as this author is aware of. Fourteen years have passed since Upasani Baba left the body, and this author is not able to discover whether the grand output of splendid divine work of Sai Baba has any counterpart in the posthumous life of Sri Upasani. In fact it is not known whether he is working from his *sukshma* body after he left his physical body in

1941. As the main idea of this chapter is to show who were the apostles who carried on Baba's name and fame and helped in his mission, we have to set out Sri Upasani Baba as one of the bright apostles who by his first instalment of service and his second instalment has rendered great and yeoman service and, therefore, is deserving of the fullest gratitude of all the world, especially of Sai bhaktas.

It is a very important duty to discharge in closing this chapter to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that the defects noted above in this great personage should not be allowed to outweigh the great service rendered by Sri Upasani to the Sai movement and to humanity. The defects appear to loom large on account of the very greatness of his personality whereas in a smaller personage, these would hardly be noticed.

Gomutra matrena payo vinashtam

Takrasya gomutra scatena kimva

Alpaischa doshah mahatam vinashtih

Papiyasam papa scatena kimva

This means, "Pure milk is destroyed by even a tiny drop of cow's urine, (and it is milk no longer). In the case of buttermilk any quantity of such urine will not alter its nature; it will be buttermilk still. In the case of great ones, even small specks of faults destroy their greatness. In the case of sinners, hundreds of sins do not matter." Sri Upasani Baba's grand work of keeping the public drawn to high moral and spiritual levels for about two decades cannot be undone by his failure to reach the acme of perfection sketched for him during his Shirdi novitiate. His achievements were remarkable, indeed so remarkable that persons like Mahatma Gandhi had a right to hope for even great national benefits from him. Unfortunate circumstances, however, prevented the fullest use being made of his faculties. Yet the reader and ourselves should never forget the greatness achieved. His services rendered to the Sai movement and to the public should not be ignored or slighted by reason of any defects. Humanity is frail and frailty attaches even to persons who reach great heights like Upasani Baba. That is the one lesson we may draw from the defects noticed above. To go beyond that and

either lose respect for him or to treat him and his institutions with disregard, contempt, or hatred would be totally unwarranted and harmful to the persons harbouring such feelings. Sai's own teaching warns us against such a mistake. (BCS 296). Following Kabir's

*'Sab ghata men Rama jage
Kyoum Kiska dil dukhalana'*

which means 'Ram or God is in all bodies. Why cause pain to any one?' Sri Sai told H. S. Dixit, *'Kaka turn Konala Vayit mhatles kim, mala dukhne, etc., i.e., 'Dixit, if you talk ill of any one, I feel pain.'* The same lesson is conveyed by the well known Niti Sloka ;

*Gunadoshou hudho grinhan indu kshvela iva Iswarah
Scirasa sctaghate purvam param kanthe niyacchati*

which means "Just as Maheswara (Lord Siva) receiving the Moon and Poison, displays to all the former on his head and conceals the latter within his throat, the wise dealing with others' good and evil qualities praise and proclaim the former and ignore the latter (by relegating them to the background)". Our wise readers will surely follow this advice.

CHAPTER VII

G.S. Khaparde

In the life of Sai Baba, the description of the starter of Sai worship and an account of other leading apostles and propagandists should be followed by a brief reference to later workers in the same field. Yet Sri Upasani's work carries us far into the third decade of this century (20th). Thereafter it devolved on less prominent workers, who yet had each notable achievements for Sai's mission to his credit, B. V. Dev and others should now engage our attention. Yet as G, S. Khaparde has been included in the list of workers and as he was regarded by Upasani in the light of a Guru, still more because his (G.S.K's) high social and political standing in the country attracted public notice to Sai Baba, who had power to release him from the jaws of Government prosecution in 1911-2 and because his daily diary (kept at that time at Shirdi and published later to the

public through S. L. Masik) forms an important source book for Sai history, he is given a prominent place here next after Upasani.

The late Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur Ganesh Sri Krishna Khaparde, Advocate of Amraoti, was a notable figure in Indian politics and law courts of Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) and in the Legislative Council. He was a redoubtable lieutenant of the extremist leader Bala Gangadhara Tilak in the Indian National Congress. The British Government was greatly afraid of the extremist section which drove home the lesson taught by Dadha Bhai Naoroji in 1904 National Congress, 'Swaraj is India's Birthright and must be granted'. The extremists wanted complete independence of India and adoption of every conceivable method by the people to get rid of the foreign yoke and roused the masses. But the moderates, formed a powerful party in the Congress headed by Sir Pherosha Mehta of Bombay, one of whose lieutenants was H. S. Dixit. who was a very successful lawyer practising at Bombay, a Member of the Bombay Corporation, and a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council. An accident to his leg in England drew H.S. Dixit to Sai Baba in 1909. The repressive activity of the Government trying to imprison and harass extremist leaders drove **G.S.** Khaparde, an extremist leader, to Baba's feet. Both G.S.K. and H.S.D. were thinking of their worldly need of Baba's help and fancied that they were coming of their own accord to Baba. But Baba revealed the truth when he said that in a former birth Baba, G.S.Khaparde, H.S. Dixit, Bapu Saheb Jog (the priest), Shama (Madhav Rao Deshpande), and Dada Kelkar were all together living with their Guru in a blind alley, and Baba added, 'I have therefore, brought all of you together'. (B. C. & S, 502). Baba also mentioned (B. C. & S, 56), when a devotee objected to people coming to him for temporal benefit, 'Do not object. My men first come to me on account of that only. They get their hearts' desires fulfilled, and after being comfortably placed in life, they follow me and progress further. I bring my men to me from long distances under many pleas. I seek them and bring them to me. They do not come of their own accord. I bring them to me. However distant, even thousands of miles away my people might be, I draw them to myself, just as we pull birds to us with a string tied to their feet'.

Already before the end of 1908, there were signs of the minds of the Members of Government in Bombay, Central Provinces, Delhi, and other places getting ruffled and arrangements were being made to prosecute the heads of the extremists including Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak. Tilak was prosecuted at Bombay. The Government being so powerful in the country, charges of sedition under 124-A I.P.C, a conveniently plastic and all embracing provision against patriots were sure to end in conviction. Still the lawyers were putting forward as much of defence as they could in such cases, chiefly with a view to point out to the public in India and Europe that what was considered ordinary and proper language in the mouths of opponents of Government in Europe and America were considered grave offences in India, punishable with transportation for life and forfeiture of all property, and this enabled Government to strangle the agitation for popular freedom in the country. Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak's trial thus was launched and finally ended in his conviction of six years of imprisonment in India and Burma. In pursuit of the same policy, other extremists in other Provinces were subjected to similar trial.

Even on the 5th December 1910, and much more in 1911 December, G. S. Khaparde, the Amraoti lawyer, with a very good practice and a very powerful influence in the extremist circle, both inside and outside the Congress, naturally expected that his turn would come to be placed in the dock with its natural results— loss of liberty, loss of health, loss of money, etc. He had the good fortune of having heard about Sai Baba's wonderful personality, that he could grip the minds of even the highest officials and was at the same time a saint of the highest type and that it would be a privilege to meet him for any person anxious to secure temporal as well as spiritual welfare. Sai was visited by both officials and nonofficials—Mamlatdars, Collectors, Judges, society leaders, etc.— who met him and fell at his feet.

On the 5th December 1910, G. S. Khaparde visited Shirdi and found numerous officials, high and low, and masses crowding to the feet of Baba. Baba was teaching people in parables and was able to protect, for instance, police officers, such as a head constable charged with extortion at a court, and to get

them acquitted, and was rendering great temporal and spiritual help to all and sundry. By 12th December 1910, he got permission to go away and left Shirdi. It is after that date the most serious time for G.S. Khaparde began. The year 1911 was a period of trials for all extremists, as Government had the support of the Moderates for crushing the Extremists and G.S. Khaparde being high up in the list of extremists naturally stood in the same perilous position. Any vigorous activity of patriots sufficed to increase the severity of the policy of repression which therefore attained Makshasic dimensions in all Provinces. Khaparde realised his own danger. Though he had a very lucrative and roaring practice especially on the criminal side, part of his clientele fell. It was feared that the man who today argued as a lawyer would tomorrow be locked up in jail, at first as an under-trial prisoner and finally sent away to the Andamans or some distant prison. His income declined. With it also his health and the spirits of all the members of his family. But he had already known where his Palladium or Sanctuary was. So on the 6th December 1911, he arrived at Shirdi. Even at his previous visit, Baba had said on 9-12-1910. 'This is your house. Why should anybody fear when I am here?'¹ This assurance was again given to Khaparde. But as his funds were low, he and the members of his family who often visit Shirdi, were very anxious that he should go back to Amraoti to resume his practice. However clever he might be as a lawyer, he himself could not say when the Government might pounce upon him and send him to prison. But there was one person in the world who could say it, who had that knowledge and who could exercise his powers to sniff out all danger from him completely.

G.S.K. had ample proof that Baba had knowledge of everything that was happening everywhere and could control the minds of everyone and control objects also including the elements. So he like others felt perfectly safe in Baba's immediate presence. Whenever he got letters or telegrams at Shirdi offering cases, the desire was strong to get back to Amraoti. So his sons and relations and clients came to take him away. Shama on his behalf frequently asked Baba whether he could get back. Sometimes Baba seemed to encourage him by giving affirmative answers. But Baba would soon recall them and say 'Go tomorrow',

which was Baba's way of saying 'Do not go'. Baba wished to make perfectly certain that Khaparde would not be prosecuted. 'My eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love Me' said Baba, (B.C. & S. 9). and he was perpetually watching the minds of the Governor and the Home Member of the Central Provinces Government and elsewhere; and he revealed to Mrs. Khaparde what he did and how he watched. It is quite evident that the Government Members were considering the prosecution of Khaparde for sedition in respect of many of his speeches. There would be no difficulty in finding matter for prosecution under 124-A, Indian Penal Code, in the speeches of Khaparde or any other patriotic extremist, for anything and everything may be easily twisted and brought under 124-A. But the Government were noting that the sensation created in the public mind by the trial of Lokamanya was itself a powerful impetus to the demand for Indian Independence and, therefore, if possible, they should avoid sensational trials. In the case of Khaparde who came to Baba on 6th December 1911 and stayed on at Shirdi with Baba for 3 months or more, refusing to accept cases in various courts, rumours got abroad that Khaparde had got crazy and had been fascinated by a crazy fakir at Shirdi, and, therefore, had refused offer of cases and given up practice, politics, society and everything else, preferring the company of a fakir. Such rumours must have reached the ears of the Government Members or made to reach their ears by Baba, and Baba must have made them think, 'Let sleeping dogs lie'. That is, the foreign Government had more advantage to gain by not ordering more prosecutions of leaders which would keep up political excitement in the country. It is this decision among high places which was obviously denoted by Baba's words.

It is noted in Khaparde's diary dated the 29th December 1911 as follows :
'He (Sai Baba) told my wife that the Governor came with a lance, that Sain Maharaj had a tussle with him and drove him out; and that he finally conciliated the Governor'. G. S, Khaparde adds—

'The language is highly figurative and, therefore difficult to interpret'.

Being too close to the trees, he could not see the forest. At this distance of time, there is no difficulty whatever to interpret the above words. Sai Baba had

given him *abhayam* saying, "Why fear when I am here?" and he was carrying out his duty of protection. That protection involved the prolonged stay of Khaparde at Shirdi, but with his extremely aggressive worldly attachment, the confinement within Shirdi was obviously irksome to the impatient spirit of Khaparde. Sai never confers a temporal benefit without attaching to it a spiritual benefit also. '*Saburi*' (Patience) or calm self-possession amidst trials is wanted alike for spiritual and temporal purposes and comes easily to men who can surrender themselves and all they call theirs to Baba, like Bala Saheb Bhate and H. S. Dixit. G. S. Khaparde in his diary notes the great calm that prevailed in the hearts of these two and also appeared in their faces, and expressly mentions that they turned a new leaf after they came to Baba. Staying with Baba is the best stimulus and help for surrender and *sahuri* (patience). Baba gave this stimulus and help to Khaparde also, but his nature could not receive them fully. Khaparde notes in his diary on the 30th December 1911, that is, the day next to the reference to the

Governor that Baba narrated (as he often did) a small tale calculated to impress (on G.S.K.) the virtue of patience. The impression of the tale on Khaparde however was poor. Baba noted his impatience and told him on the 1st January, i.e., next day, that he (Khaparde) was "anxious to run away." He dismissed all the company with him and retained only Khaparde to tell him that. But still the impression on G.S.K. was poor. The very next day his son came to take him back to Amraoti, for his absence therefrom meant loss of income and increased expenditure. On the 3rd January 1912, his son and one Gopal Rao asked Baba for permission. Baba gave it first and soon after rescinded the permission. Shama also went and asked Baba leave for Khaparde's departure. Baba replied that Khaparde had his house both at Shirdi and at Amraoti and that he might stay where he liked, and that he might never return to Amraoti. That settled the matter. Some time later, when pressed about the same by Shama, Baba said, 'Conditions are not favourable to Khaparde for his return to Amraoti'. Moreover, Khaparde was far too deep in the world and the world was far too deep in him, and Baba wished to give him a double advantage by his stay at Shirdi to escape prosecution and to advance in detachment. Unfortunately, the

very high degree of attachment to the world that persisted in Khaparde despite his great learning in sacred books and his daily prayers, attendance at a good number of puran, bhajan, and kirtans, prevented his receiving adequate benefits from Sainath Maharaj.

Baba's company was the highest education one could get. As a Mahratta saying goes, 'Let us stay with saints. If they do not give us Upadesa, let us note what they do and say. That is the best Upadesa'. H. S. Dixit had the very great advantage of six or seven months' stay with Baba, and he also kept a diary in which he noted not only what he did and other visitors did but also all that Baba did and said. G S.K's diary is printed in the Sai Lila Masik', the official organ of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, Volumes II and III, in English, for he kept his diary in English. He gives such varied information about Baba, and his visitors especially about the stories that Baba narrated. That is. his diary is justly regarded as a valuable mine of information about Baba; and 'he may be regarded as the *Shirdi Pepys*. There is considerable resemblance between Pepys and Khaparde, in their mentality.

Only 3½ months were over, when Baba had completely swept out all traces of ideas of prosecution of "the extremist Khaparde". Baba had extinguished the idea of prosecution from the minds of all responsible authorities. Evidently it was after the official files regarding Khaparde's Prosecution were sent to the record room to be lodged that Baba allowed Khaparde to return to Amraoti. Meanwhile his stay at Shirdi was not without benefit to him. Khaparde was a master of Sanskrit and Maharatti. He was conversant with the chief books in both these languages on spiritual subjects, and as there was some leisure for him after perusing the daily newspapers, and chats with visitors, he studied those books. He went on reading *Parama Amrita*, an excellent and exhaustive treatise on spiritual topics in Mahratti and Panchadasi in Sanskrit, (the latter both he and Baba labelled as 'our treasure house of information'). Khaparde was studying Ranganatha's Mahratti summary 'Yoga of Vasishtha' and listening to Gathas of Eknath, Das Bodha, etc. Baba's moral tales and Baba's chamatkars were also the subject of his talk with his usual companions there, viz., Upasani Maharaj,

Dada Kelkar, Babu Saheb Jog, and occasional visitors like Mrs. Koujalgi, Balakrishna Upasani sastri, N.G. Chandorkar, C. V. Vaidya, B V. Dev, Mr Mankar, etc. The talks he had were always full of much spiritual food for reflection and absorption. His maintaining a diary should have served a double purpose, namely, not only to make a record for future reference but also to constitute a good photograph of his mind and the influences brought to bear on it at that time. Psycho-analysts advise their visitors to note down freely all that occurs to them, page after page, and day after day. This is a valuable means to discover how the mind of the writer works, what its predilections are, and what its peculiar avoidances. Mr. Khaparde's diary when placed side by side with H. S. Dixit's is a valuable index to show the difference between the two²⁰ and the points of similarity between them. H, S. Dixit was an England returned M.L.A., a successful lawyer, and an active Congressman. But he retired from all these and in 1912 was leading the life of a Vanaprasta with Baba enjoying thorough peace and developing considerably in his spiritual state. Khaparde also was an active politician, lawyer, and an England returned Congressman, who had retreated to Shirdi and stayed there though not with a view to making spiritual advance, but mainly with a view to ascape from the Governmental claws, when that British Government was trying to clutch at his throat. Khaparde was in matters of study of religious books far more advanced than H. S. Dixit. In fact he was a teacher of a group at Shirdi for Paramamrita, Panchadasi, and Yoga Vasishta classes and lectured on contemplation and other similar subjects to his small class. Sri Upasani Baba declared about 1936 in the presence of this author that he regarded Khaparde as his Guru, evidently by reason of his teachings in those classes at Shirdi. But Dixit's advance in calmness and appropriation of Baba's

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- ²⁰ *No doubt comparisons are said lo be odious. But when two eminent politicians, eminent also in the service of Sai. have both of them maintained diaries and these are published, a few thoughts may be humbly offered in any biography of Sai about them. But nothing written here detracts from the great merits of either of these.

spiritual gifts was much greater and Dixit's death revealed that he had been "taken in a vimana" as promised by Baba after being rendered fit for being taken in a vimana, i.e., after dedicating himself to Sai Baba and rendering a whole life of service to Baba and humanity. With Khaparde there was no such dedication. His heart was engrossed too much with the world. From Baba he went back to practice and politics, to accumulate wealth and fame, and he achieved practically all these, i.e. all that he could or should expect from the part he played in politics and social affair. His son after successful practice became a Minister, and he (G. S. Khaparde) himself became a Member of the Council of State. After living for a long time he passed away full of honours and fame and that is just what one would expect by reading his diary maintained at Shirdi.

In the list of the chief "Sources for Sai's History" one is glad to note that Khaparde's diary is a notable source of information. So far as it goes, it contains references to all external things that took place at Shirdi during his stay and the talks and behaviour of Sai Baba which may be noticed by any spectator. The tales of Baba that are narrated in the diary are the notable exceptions to the view that the diary is mainly worldly. One other important exception to the rule of worldliness, the one matter of which Khaparde could give direct information, is a matter of considerable importance. Khaparde notes on several dates that Baba cast on him and on some others a '*Yogic glance*', a sort of *Saktinipata*, as a result of which the person receiving the glance, e.g. Khaparde, was immersed deep in an ocean of bliss for hours and hours. On some dates he says Baba gave no yogic glances. These glances were probably part of the inducement by Baba to pull Khaparde away from the depth of his worldliness and external attachments in order to make him lead a life of surrender, detachment and *Atma Nishta*. We note the frequent mention of Khaparde's morning prayers everyday and we may presume that in these prayers, he endeavoured to get free from his cares and troubles. Evidently these prayers were the usual prayers e.g. Pratah *Smarana* and not special ones nor addressed to Baba. He was firmly convinced that Baba knew everything and could arrange everything, and he felt that while remaining at Shirdi he was perfectly safe from molestation from any quarters. But

he was too much overpowered by the ideas in his religious books to feel and say that Baba was God. In fact when writing a preface to M. W. Pradhan's 'Glimpses of Indian Spirituality', decades after he had left Shirdi, he writes that Baba came very near to his idea of God, not that Baba was God to him. His preface (in 1936) to an English translation of Upasani Baba's utterances shows how little of the self had been snuffed out from him and what spiritual stage he reached. He writes there in a patronizing way to defend Upasani Baba against the attacks that had become innumerable and that defence perhaps was the only object of the preface or foreword.

Khaparde never revealed in his diary the innermost portion of his heart. In fact the diary is an extrovert diary. It is quite possible that Khaparde derived notable benefit for his soul from his contact with Baba, but he has not expressed it either in his diary or in any of his writings that we come across. The public have in any case to be grateful to Khaparde for maintaining his diary for nearly four months of his contact with Baba and making them available for Sai history. He was undoubtedly a great religious scholar and one who could perceive the greatness of Baba. The fact that he had achieved great fame and name in politics, law, and social affairs (denoted by Baba's terming him. 'Sarkar¹') would also have rendered his stay at Shirdi an additional means of spreading Baba's name abroad.

Two very important things about Khaparde are not found detailed in the diary, viz the facts of Mrs. G. S. Khaparde's previous births and previous service to Baba, and Baba's withdrawing the plague from his son Balwant's body to himself. The last is to be found in Shama's statement (See Dev. Exp.). From Dec. 1911 for 3 months plague raged at Shirdi and Balwant, son of Khaparde, had an attack. There was the bubo and fever, and the mother of the patient went to Baba with tears asking whether it was to sacrifice her child that she had come to Shirdi. Baba spoke in parables assuring her that all would be well. She could not understand him and later Baba showed on his own person bubos and told her that he had to bear all these to save her son. He also said that he had saved Balwant and that his orders were supreme, *Ajna Apratihata*. Accordingly Balwant

recovered and so also Baba. This reminds one of a similar sacrifice of Baba on behalf of another devotee. Mrs. Tarabai Sadahsiv Tarkhad of Poona came to Shirdi with a long-standing eye trouble which her doctor could not diagnose or cure. She came to Shirdi and sat before Baba. Baba cast his glance at her eyes and her eyes ceased to pain or water and Baba's eyes were watering. That was an end to her eye trouble, and she wondered how instantaneously Baba worked the cure of a disease which baffled doctors. Similarly Noverkar with high fever sent his son with Rs. 500 to Baba. Baba received the sum and at once limbs began to shiver. Baba explained that he had to bear the burdens of his devotees. Noverkar was of course cured.

In the case of Khaparde, Baba mentioned no doubt the rinanubandha noted already in this chapter. The most interesting statement of rinanubandha was in respect of Mrs Khaparde. One day when a number of naivedyas were placed one after another before Baba he did not touch any one of them. When Mrs. Khaparde's naivedya was brought, he at once put it into his mouth. Then Shama, who occasionally took liberties with Baba, asked why he was so partial to Mrs. Khaparde's naivedya and Baba gave an account of Mrs. Khaparde's love and service to him birth after birth. Baba said, 'She was formerly a cow of a bunya and gave (me) plenty of milk. Then she was born of a mali (gardener) and later went to a Kshatriya. Then she married the bunya. Then she was born a Brahmin. After a long spell of time, I am seeing her again, and the food she gives me is sweet (with her love)'. Mrs. Khaparde's prema more than Mr. Khaparde's self-interested visit to Shirdi it was that operated powerfully on Baba and made him take so much trouble for each member of that family, Baba did not give mantra upadesa except in exceptional cases. Baba gave it to Mrs. G.S.K. thus: Go on saying "Rajah Ram, Rajah Ram".

Referring to Mr. Khaparde's ambition, Baba stated that the ambition was deeply ingrained and evident in a previous life also. Baba stated that in a former birth, 'You (Khaparde) were with me for two or three years, and went into royal service, though there was enough at home to live in comfort.'

Baba's help, therefore, to Khaparde's family was partly temporal but the most notable part of it was the development of Mrs. Khaparde's soul stage after stage in furtherance of which he gave her Rama mantropadesa.

Strangely enough, the husband's diary makes no mention of such highly important and interesting facts.

A few words more about Sri Khaparde's diary are here called for. The first point that has struck many a man who saw the printed diary in Sai Lila Masik, Volumes II and III, is that it is extremely dry and so very uninteresting to the general reader as to make him skip over the pages. However, here and there some highly interesting matter about Sai Baba gleams through the rest just like bits of gold gleaming through a mass of mire or ore. No doubt the ore is valuable and no part of it is usually thrown away till it is subjected to the proper chemical process for extraction of the precious metal. Here also a good deal of the diary will be found to have its value when dealt with properly. But who are the persons who can so deal with it? Usually, the devotee is not possessed of the necessary patience or ability. No doubt to every Sai devotee, anything connected with Sai becomes important. Small things about chilm, about songs, about the way Baba walked, about the persons he met, are all found to be highly interesting to certain sets of persons. But to many others the matter may be either unattractive or repulsive. However, in the case of this diary most of the matter can be turned into interesting matter by a proper historian or biographer taking up the same and piecing out the necessary parts from it and putting them into the biography or history that he is compiling. In fact the great value of a diary like this is its historical value. In the matter of ascertainment of dates and facts, its value is indeed very great.

We shall just mention one instance.

Upasani Baba was a very important person who came under the influence of Sai Baba and attained to great heights, and the facts of his biography are therefore of very great importance in understanding him and his history as also the way in which Baba dealt with him. One gets sometimes puzzled when he notes that Sai Baba mentioned that for four years Upasani was to stay at Shirdi and at the end

of that period he would attain to full-blown divinity. According to Upasani Lilamrita, which is either a biography or at least chronicles of Upasani, written practically to his dictation and revised by him carefully, mention is made that Sai Baba stated that Upasani had undergone the four years and had attained full divinity. A student of Upasani's life, who may have great reverence for Upasani, would still be compelled to admit that the full-blown expression of divinity did not occur in Sri Upasani's life, that is, in any portion of Upasani's life up to the end of it in 1941, and he may, therefore, wonder how Sai Baba could have made such an inaccurate remark as that stated above. Here then comes the value of this Khaparde's diary. Upasani had clearly forgotten the date of his arrival or even the year of his arrival and the year or the date of his departure from Shirdi. He fancied that he had really spent four years under Sai and thus dictated to his biographer that four years had been spent and the biographer puts it into Sai's mouth as though he uttered it. As for the date of his arrival, Khaparde's diary discloses that Upasani had not been at Shirdi in December 1910 and therefore did not arrive that year at Shirdi. Again in his entry of 8-12— 1911 Sri Khaparde notes that Upasani vaidya who was not at Shirdi in the previous year, was present at Shirdi in 1911, was under an order of Baba to stay for four years there, and was living at Khandoba's. That fixes the arrival date of Upasani as June 1911. And about his departure also similar investigation, though not in this case with the help of Sri Khaparde's diary, furnishes proof that he departed not in 1915 but in 1914 itself. Therefore it is an unavoidable conclusion that Upasani did not spend four years as required at Shirdi but only three years and therefore one begins to understand how Sri Sai Baba's words about him that he would attain full-blown divinity had not been fulfilled. No doubt Sri Upasani attained divine qualities of a certain sort and carried on splendid religious work, but that is not the same as saying that he attained complete divinity, and thus we find the use of Khaparde's diary used strictly as a history source book for purposes of research in dealing with Sai Baba and his devotees.

Again one may admit that chronology and history might receive too much of attention. Neither Upasani nor Sai Baba cared for chronology as such. In point of

fact, Upasani Baba dissuaded people from going into research about the origins and dates of the earlier period of his life. However, people with great affection for Baba, naturally wish to discover as much as they can inspite of the saying *Nadimoolam Rishermoolam Vicharyam na kadachana* which means, 'Do not go into the origins of sacred rivers or Rishis'. The obvious reason is that many a man who has great reverence for these might discover that their origins were quite contemptible and might run the risk of losing his reverence for these in their later developments. Take the Godavari for instance. It is a grand river which is highly venerated and referred to as Ganga, but its origin high up in the Triambak hill shows it to be a petty thing, a tiny spring, and though it is worshipped there by some, there is nothing suggestive of anything great about it. So one is apt to lose one's regard for Godavari by seeing its origin. The origin of Palar, Cauvery, etc., may similarly be found to be petty and not worth the trouble of visiting. About great Rishis, the origins of Vyasa and Narada, for instance, are extremely unfortunate. Vyasa was the offspring of Parasara through his sudden contact with a fisherwoman whom he happened to meet on the banks of a river. Parasara immediately proceeded to contact the woman because he considered the moment auspicious for the production of good issue. Vyasa was that product. Hence the question of Vyasa's caste has been raised, and respect for Vyasa's grand productions is apt to be imperilled by those who consider his origin as important. About Narada also, it is mentioned in the Bhagavata that he was the issue of a slave girl, and anyhow by his efforts he had risen high and obtained a momentary sakshatkar or vision of God. When he wanted that vision to become permanent, he was informed that his birth having been so low, he was not to have permanent sakshatkar in that janma and so he had to take another birth and in the subsequent birth he had perpetual sakshatkar. So the man with a tendency to cavil at things might consider the utterances or productions of Narada like Narada Bhakti Sutras lose their importance or value by reason of Narada's being once a dancing girl's child. We have gone very far afield in explaining above stanza, but to come back to the main point, there is nothing low in the known life of Upasani Baba and practically nothing at all is known about

the origins and early life of Sri Sai Baba. There is a certain cloud of mystery hanging over every period of Sai Baba's life and Baba allowed it to remain so, evidently because there is no necessity to remove that mist. The haze of uncertainty adds to one's reverence just like the haze about the morning sun adds to its beauty in several seasons. Therefore the ascertainment of history and facts is not a necessity or condition in all cases, and one may overdo his attachment to history and that perhaps is the reason why neither Upasani nor Sai encouraged research into history. But to a modern mind, historical research becomes a patent necessity and the educated feel naturally an interest to ascertain facts and their proper arrangement or presentation. Without these, even a holy person's life loses a certain portion of its value. Taking Sai Baba's own case, lack of arrangement in the materials presented by Sai Sat Charitra, which is only a disorderly conglomeration of various events and utterances in Baba's life, puzzles one and leaves one unsatisfied. We have many gems everywhere one feels, but one feels also at the same time what a brilliant diamond necklace can be made out of it if only the diamonds can be arranged in proper order. Hence we must not ignore the value of a history source book.

There is one other matter which one has to mention in connection with Khaparde's diary. Khaparde went on writing the diary in the way in which he would maintain his diary at home for his domestic events, that is, more with a view to keep it as a reminder to him later on when he should attempt to recall which persons on which days met him and what transpired. He was not writing the diary under the orders of any psycho-analyst. Far from submission to psycho-analysis, the diary rather maintains a reticence which one can easily understand when one notes that the writer of the diary had no idea of getting dissected and observed under the microscope of any overzealous scientific student of his life. So far indeed is he free from that set of ideas, that he does not mention even highly important facts necessary to understand his own conduct. The diarist does not say why he visited Baba in 1910 and again in 1911. The diary discloses very little clue to understand it. One has to make extraneous researches and then find out the actual cause of his visits.

Sai Baba was a great spiritual personality and every one would take it that Khaparde went there to get the punya of even a momentary contact with such a high personality as Sai. But that will be a misreading of the facts. On both the occasions, Khaparde had important reasons and these were discovered by looking into the political history of Government activities of persecuion and or prosecution of patriots. With reference to the 98 days' stay of Khaparde (December 1911 to the middle of March 1912) a few incidents are noted which give a clue to the object of his visit. Baba did not allow him to depart and mentioned that the times were not favourable for his departure, and that Baba met the Governor who came with a lance to pierce Khaparde and put him aside, Strangely enough, instead of stating that this meant that his prosecution under section 124-A was being warded off, Khaparde simply notes 'The language is figurative and hard to interpret'. Those of us who are in the know of things find it the easiest language to interpret whatever may have been the reasons for Khaparde's saying that the interpretation was hard.

Apart from the above, the value of a diary in understanding the stage at which he had arrived in his spiritual condition and how Baba operated on him from the spiritual standpoint, is naturally very great. We see that Khaparde went to Baba not at all for spiritual improvement but merely to seek protection from Government persecution and prosecution which none but Sai could give. But Sai Baba always attached a string to his grant of protection. With the grant of temporal benefits he imperceptibly improved the spiritual condition of the recipient. Here, in Khaparde's case, a few facts in the diary disclose how Baba dealt with him.

The first point to notice is that Baba did not force the pace of spiritual advancement in this visitor's case any more than in others' cases. Baba would have had excellent reasons to immediately promote Khaparde's spiritual interests because Khaparde had been in one of his previous janmas a fellow pupil along with Baba under the same Guru, and in another janma had been a member of the same family with Baba, having sufficient to live upon but still, getting impelled by high ambition, Khaparde chose to leave the family and seek royal service in

order to advance his economic or other position. This just gives a hint that ambition was deep in the nature of Khaparde not only in the 19th century birth but in previous births as well. Such a person would have had excellent help for striving high up in the spiritual line. Yet Baba did not force the pace. He allowed him to take his own time and adopt his own ways for his spiritual amelioration. Like 95 per cent of the orthodox religious people, Khaparde also had his religious convictions and ideas of spiritual improvement. Therefore, he went on with his prayers, attendance at bhajans, and study of Panchadasi, Paramamrita, Yoga Vasishta, Dasa Bodha, etc. These no doubt have their value, but most of the orthodox people make the study of these and the adoption of the other programmes mentioned above, the be-all and end-all of religion. They stop all their spiritual practices with these. In Sai's course these formed a very minor item in one's spiritual advancement. The main thing is to surrender to the Guru wholeheartedly and be at his mercy for everything, depending upon the Guru for everything and treating him as the all-in-all of the sadhaka. Khaparde was certainly not prepared to make such a surrender. In fact the two great essentials for a sadhaka are (1) *Nishta* and (2) *Saburi*, that is, full faith in the Guru and a readiness to wait long, very long for seeing the benefits. Baba had adopted that course himself and had given *Nishta* and *Saburi* to his own Guru. As for Khaparde, he was not prepared with full *Nishta*, that is, full faith in his Guru. He maintained his old line of thought, that is, great attachment to wealth, comfort, name, position, and a slight veneer of religiosity combined with respectable life as quite sufficient for his purpose. With such a mentality, one could not expect any great advance in his spiritual condition. Sai Baba did not force the pace and make him surrender all that.

Sai knew or foreknew or foreordained the subsequent life of Khaparde after releasing him from the immediate danger of persecution namely that his ambitions and energies were all to be utilised in totally different fields and his greatness was to consist in becoming an M.L.C. and the father of a Minister of the Central Provinces etc. All that Khaparde achieved. No doubt he has made a fairly good advance in religion as understood by him. However great that

advance may be, especially from his own standpoint, that advance cannot be treated as advance from Sai's viewpoint. Any Sai sishya would see that all that is insignificant and practically amounts to nothing when compared with what Sai could achieve for him had he surrendered himself to Sai. But in the case of Khaparde he was very far from attempting the Sai viewpoint.

Humility and a readiness for poverty were the prerequisites for one to benefit by contacting a Samartha Sadguru. In the case of Khaparde, he (Khaparde) notes that, when his wife massaged the feet of Baba, the latter said that Dixit should give Rs. 200 to her. This at once mortified Khaparde. His pride felt wounded at the idea that he, a practising lawyer, should be thought so low as to make his wife receive Rs. 200 from a Bombay lawyer like Dixit, though his (GSK's) funds were indeed very low and he badly required Rs.200 or more. Later he understood that the Rs. 200 was only symbolical, that it meant Dixit's achievement of (1) poverty and (2) patience or contentment with his poor lot. Khaparde rebelled at this idea also. He did not want poverty. He did not go to Shirdi to remain poor for ever. On the other hand he wanted to amass wealth and attain high position and Sai was his cat's paw to get at the desired things. Khaparde never forgot that he was an Hon. Member of the Council and had visited England, was high up in politics and looked up to by all and sundry as a great social and political leader and a highly learned scholar who could even teach Panchadasi to Upasani and others. The diary frequently mentions that his position was all in all in his eyes and when others came to Shirdi, he was an institution to be visited by them just as they visited Baba. He spent his time in talks with such visitors and in his study of the daily papers to note especially what happened in the world generally, perhaps with special reference to his own condition and the possibilities of his own delicate position getting more delicate and more dangerous. A psycho-analyst studying the diary would at once declare that the mentality displayed in the diary is almost the antipodes of what the mentality of a sadhaka like Dixit should be and was. Dixit made considerable advance and, as Khaparde notes, turned over a new leaf, and there was a calm visible on his face due to his internal peace. He notes the same in the case of

Bala Saheb Bhate, a retired Mamlatdar, who had the same calm on his face, though he had forsaken the lucrative office of a Mamlatdar, without anything to fall back upon. Yet he was able to achieve great calm. These are the exact opposites of Khaparde. Baba's dealing with such a person on the spiritual side is highly interesting. In some matters Khaparde's moral and spiritual condition was far from being satisfactory, and it was known to Baba. Of course, this should not be discussed either in the diary or in this biography, but there is sufficient hint given of that position in Baba's dealings with him mentioned in the diary.

Khaparde notes that Baba gave him advice in a fatherly way keeping him (Khaparde) alone for giving that advice. To show him that at the age of 58 he should no longer be thinking of sex gratification, Baba gently gives a hint by calling his wife 'Ajibai', meaning 'an old lady'¹. Khaparde unable to take the same viewpoint mentions the same in the diary regarding it as something unintelligible whereas for one who is able to read between the lines and note what is behind the scenes and what was to happen later on, it is clear that Baba was pressing the button just at the proper point and gave a valuable suggestion.

Again as to the possibility of further progress, especially in the matter of reaching God, that is realising Satchidananda, nothing could be done in dealing with a sadhaka in Khaparde's condition unless he should thoroughly submit himself to Baba's rigorous discipline. Yet what did Baba do? Did he give up the task as hopeless? Certainly not. To Baba nothing is hopeless. Khaparde could work at reaching Satchidananda, but not at that time nor perhaps in that life. So, he eggs him on to great efforts in that noble direction. He gives him a Pisgah sight of that promised land. He favours him with a few Yogic glances off and on, the effect of these yogic glances being to immerse Khaparde deep in a pool of bliss without any external visible stimulus whatever. Khaparde's joys in getting a fat sessions case or success in a sensational trial or getting loud plaudits or cheers from the mass listening to his humorous and highly cutting utterances, and his domestic joys were perhaps the highest that he had experience of. Till he came to Sai all his joys evidently were joys due to external causes, but when Baba's glances came, without any external stimulus, (without any fee, or birth of

a grandchild or applause) he was feeling waves of joy swallowing up his being for hours. This is an indication that the soul has vast resources of the highest sort of bliss independent of external stimuli. This is a very valuable spur to one to work hard and proceed to realise Parabrahma or Satchidananda, which would give him joy and peace without any external cause for ever. This is one of the valuable spiritual services rendered to Khaparde by Sri Sai. There may be one or two more of that sort noticeable in the diary, but perhaps in this article unconsciously the dissection of Khaparde has gone to unpardonable lengths, and it is high time that such dissection stopped. A careful reader of his diary might light upon the other points not mentioned here, that is, points in which Sai Baba analysed his character and promoted the chance of his reaching a high spiritual state and reaching God or Satchidananda.

One thought that preponderates in the mind of any one studying carefully the diary of Mr. Khaparde and the possibilities that he had before him is the extent to which those possibilities were achieved. One clear possibility is that a person who had been a fellow student with Baba in a former janma under the same Guru and one who was a member of the same family with Baba and who left the family to seek royal service would be a person who would be advanced by Baba to the fullest spiritual height that Baba could help him to. Baba's powers were immense. He himself said (B.C.S. 91) 'I have very great powers', as shown in the case of Upasani and others. Baba could mould the inmost soul of any person attending upon him with a receptive and passive mood of surrender. So it was possible for G.S. Khaparde to have reached great heights like that of Sai Baba himself. But from the facts of Khaparde's life being now well known since he died in 1938 we note that none of these possibilities ever got achieved. On the other hand he was just developing on the lines he had before he approached Baba and had a brilliant life purely from the conventional or worldly standpoint. The world was too much with him to allow him to benefit by the Sai approach. As Wordsworth wrote :

The world is too much with us; late and soon.

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

Wordsworth says that it is much better to be a pagan and have visions of Proteus and Triton rather than be a highly civilized man without any such visions. But worldly men will always be worldly men. Few care to change their nature completely and begin a new life. To get to great ends, one must abandon all earthly ambition and face poverty and obloquy, if need be, calmly and cheerfully and hold on to the Guru as the be-all and end-all of one's existence. This high ideal we find in the diary is held up before Khaparde for his consideration and concentration. But he never cared to accept that ideal. Passivity was anathema to him. He preferred even at Shirdi, when he could always contact Baba, to spend his time reading up every bit of newspaper and writing letters to friends. Once Baba wanted to draw his attention to the absurdity of frittering away time like that at his age and stage and Baba asked him what he was doing and what he had been doing in the morning. His answer being writing letters, Baba's comment was 'it is better to move your fingers instead of sitting idle'. The next day, even in the act of writing letters, Khaparde went to sleep. The *tamas* in him was so powerful that he was frequently indulging in long sleep when he ought to have attended to artis and classes or kept busy. For a healthy man of only 58 (Khaparde's age at that time) day sleep was not wanted at all. Yet Khaparde was having long spells of day sleep and sometimes he slept away when the noonday arti was going on in the Masjid. When Baba was told that Khaparde could not be roused up by people calling at his place, Baba said that he himself would wake Khaparde up. Khaparde was roused up just before the close of the noonday arati about 1 or 2 p.m. and thus was made to attend that arti. Baba gave him good advice not to allow this tamasic tendency of oversleeping, but Khaparde was unable to follow that advice. Hence for one reason or another, the ideals kept before him by Baba were not achieved even in such small matters as keeping awake.

As for facing poverty, Khaparde notes how bitter it was to him. On the 1st February 1912, when Baba said that Dixit should give Rs. 200 to his (K's) wife, Khaparde notes in his diary as already stated 'Has it come to this? I prefer death to this'. He adds that Baba wanted to put down his pride. But his pride could not

be put down. Baba wanted to show the pettiness of the "great objects"¹ that were greatly moving the heart and soul of Khaparde.

Wealth was the chief aim. On the 13th February, Baba pointed out, 'Here is the cow of Dixit. Formerly it was a Jalna man's. Before that it was somebody else's and before that it was Mahlsapathy's. God knows whose it is'. He was pointing out that property was not anything permanent and not worth striving for. On the other hand he pointed out that so far as the absolute needs of the body were concerned, a person who had firm faith had no fear of lacking them. Baba gave the assurance that none who had firm faith in God would be left in want. Baba also gave the assurance that He was powerful and his orders were supreme. Baba also pointed out the obverse of the above story. In referring to one of his earlier lives, he said that his father at that time was a rich man. Having differences with his father, he left his father and went away. Finding a heap of treasure on the way, he was dotting on the same and spending his time thereon. This, Baba said, made him a cobra, that is, a very inferior species of rajasic and tamasic creature. This was the effect of over-fondness towards wealth. Baba pointed out that he got disgusted with that later on, left the treasure, and resumed his human form. Thus Baba tried to hold up before Khaparde the pettiness of men who were hankering after wealth, wealth of the world that never lasts. How was Khaparde to get his wealth? Only by seeking the favour of innumerable persons and avoiding the displeasure of others. All this required that his time and attention should be wasted upon petty creatures. Baba told him that he must serve God alone and he also repeated that advice. Baba said, 'What God gives lasts for ever; what man gives does not'. This was repeated time and again to Khaparde, but all that was lost upon him.

Another hint we derive from the diary is that Baba in addition to launching his attack against the pro Kanchana portion of human nature was attacking also the other weakness that humanity is prone to, that is, the pro-kamini passion (sex urge.) That must he made to grow less and less powerful as age advances. Certainly at 58 the sastras want persons to give up Grihastashrama and take to the next, their evening *savanam*, i.e. take to Vanaprastha leading on to Sanyasa.

That cannot be done if the sex element is allowed to preponderate. So Baba conveyed very gentle lessons after giving "fatherly advice" to Khaparde driving others away from the Mosque at that time so that he might give that advice in private to Khaparde. No doubt Khaparde does not give out what the fatherly advice was about. But there is not much difficulty in inferring that the above point must have formed a portion of that advice. Baba at other times also wanted to press home that lesson by insisting upon one's maintaining the lofty human stature one has already achieved and the further levels that humanity leads to. On one occasion, he asked Khaparde pointing to a fruit, 'How many fruits it is capable of producing?' Khaparde's answer was, 'Thousand times the number of seeds in it', Baba assented and said that the vegetable followed a law of its own. This means that vegetable creation can follow the instinct for reproduction *ad libitum*, but humanity has restraints and high standards in order to achieve higher and higher levels of being. As already stated Khaparde's inability to see the same lesson conveyed by Baba when he called Mrs. Khaparde 'Ajibai' is something striking. 'Ajibai' means old lady or grandmother, that is, the grand mother's stage is one at which no further thoughts of sex reproduction should be entertained. Any person would easily see that Baba's use of that term conveyed a hint to Mr. Khaparde that he should no longer regard his wife as one for purposes of sex gratification or reproduction but must treat her as soul companion for spiritual purposes mainly. All these lessons given to Khaparde were lost upon him completely. Neither about wealth nor about sex control was he in a mood to take lessons. He was quite self-sufficient and quite learned enough in the sastras to take care of himself as he thought. The result is that he came to a gold mine like Sai Baba and took away very little of gold. This loss of a grand opportunity to achieve spiritual success makes one recall the well-known couplet —

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen.

The saddest are these. It might have been."

We have all to be alert and profit by the mistakes of others, lest the same epitaph "Lost opportunity" be ours.

With reference to other entries in the diary, we note how Baba was operating. Strangely enough, hints only are given by the diarist, and he does not explain or even express them clearly. Let us take the case of his son Balwant and his plague attack (which has already been briefly set out but which ought to be further expanded). There was plague in the beginning of 1912 at Shirdi. Baba himself was therefore cleaning up the Masjid, and when a deputation of villagers went to him to save them from plague, he advised them to clean up all the tombs and public places and feed the poor. It is following on that there appears to have been a recrudescence of plague at Shirdi and cases of plague did occur. Khaparde's son Balwant got definitely ill on the 19th January 1912 obviously due to the epidemic, and he continued ill for three weeks and he could not leave his bed. It is only on the 8th February following that he could stir. The all-knowing Baba knew what was coming, and on the day preceding the attack of illness, namely, 18th January 1912, he stated in the midst of a lot of foul abuse that he had saved Balwant and that he had saved also G. S. Khaparde. G.S. Khaparde does not attach any special meaning to the swearing and the use of harsh words on that day or on similar occasions on other days. One who has studied Baba's dealings would find a meaning in those harsh words.

Let us note the following case. Gadgi Bua, that is, a very poor saint, who was the owner of only a mud pot, had the ambition to build a grand edifice for charitable purposes and somehow destiny aided him in putting up a grand structure at Pandharpur. (This reminds of George Muller's powerful faith that enabled him to get nearly twenty millions of pounds voluntarily sent to him from time to time in the course of many years to construct many children's orphanages). When Gadgi Bua started building his dharmasala at Nasik, the flow of monetary help stopped abruptly after he reached a limited success only in putting up a set of rooms. Then he felt disgusted and thought that the best thing he could do was to approach a person like Sai Baba for help. So he went to Shirdi and came to Baba. At once Sai Baba uttered a lot of foul abuse, 'hard words' as Khaparde calls them. Gadgi Bua at once understood what they meant. It is not Gadgi Bua that Baba was abusing foully, but he was cursing away and

driving away the bad fortune that hampered the progress of his work. Gadgi Bua laughed at once and Baba also laughed at once. Gadgi Bua went back. His bad fortune had been driven away and money again came enabling him to build the dharmasala he had begun.

This throws light upon the hard words used on the 18th of January 1912 in the midst of which Baba said, 'I have saved Balwant; I have saved Dada Sabebe (Khaparde) whom the fakir wants to kill'. Baba's words were really magical words of power driving away disease, misfortune, etc. It is on the 19th, the day following the hard words, that the fever began and it lasted 21 days and then ceased. All this was foreseen and foreordained by Baba. The hard words of the 18th coupled with the assertion that he had saved Balwant showed that Baba knew that the attack of plague was coming and the attack was going to be innocuous. Khaparde does not give out the fact that Baba had drawn the disease to himself from Balwant. Shama says in his statement that when Balwant's mother went and cried before him, Baba showed bubos on his own person and declared that he had to suffer for his people's sake. That meant evidently that he had drawn away Balwant's disease to his own body. When Balwant was cured, Baba also was cured. These are valuable facts for us to understand the immense power of Baba and his immense kindness which are praised in the *Sej Arti* every night thus: *Ranjavisi tum madura bolini, maya jaisa nija mula ho/Bhogisi Vyadhim turn cha haruniyam Nijasevak dukhale ho, Dhavuni bhakta vyasana harisi*, etc., which means "By sweet words you gladden like a mother. You remove the diseases of your servants and bear them yourself. You run to relieve them, etc." Such wonderful power and kindness ought to suffice to enable one to give up everything and stick to Baba. Baba showed his powers, as the diary shows, to Khaparde in other matters also. When the Patils were quarrelling among themselves, he could stop the quarrel by simply saying from the Mosque, "Don't beat." Similarly he showed control over the minds of not merely Government Members or the Governor but also over those of others like the Magistrate who was trying the case against his (Baba's) servant Raghu on appeal.

Khaparde's diary gives ample proof that Baba was superhuman in his range of powers and in his ability to help people to the greatest heights of human achievement. Letting alone other points, we may refer to the main thing. Khaparde was very good at his sastras and scriptural study. What do they say? They say that the aim and goal of all life is to reach Brahmananda which rests not upon external contact nor upon obtaining anything from outside, but upon the Atma dwelling upon the Atma alone.

Baba gave proof of the fact that he himself was such an *Anna jnani* immersed in *Paramananda* and that he could draw people into that state. This *Paramananda* or enjoyment, not based upon externals, was brought home to the mind of Khaparde by numerous yogic glances already referred to. In his diary Khaparde notes that on the 13th January 1912, Baba gave a Yogic glance. Khaparde adds, 'I was in ecstasy of bliss the whole day'. Other instances also of similar enjoyment vouchsafed to him are noted. All these are most precious gifts and offers of the most precious thing a man could achieve and yet all these were lost upon Khaparde. Why? Because the world's attraction was too great for the attraction of the spirit or Brahman.

Baba's control of the spirit of any one near him is noted in the diary. For instance on the 17th January 1912, the diary mentions 'Baba smiled benignly. It is worthwhile spending years here (Shirdi) to see it even once. I was overjoyed and stood gazing like mad...' On the same date the diarist also notes that Baba (in Dakshinamoorthi fashion) gave silent instructions which though not understood immediately were understood a few hours later, at the Wada arti. In another place Khaparde notes that Baba made him understand things and solve his puzzles merely by giving him his chilm to smoke. Yet with all these inducements, Khaparde in great anxiety, like his own relations, went away from Shirdi to amass wealth and fame and keep to his political, social and legal position or ambition. This, of course, is quite natural, and not objectionable but yet may be considered unfortunate by those who think that achievement of Paramartha is more important than all these. The fact that Khaparde did not take the latter view beams out from the diary. On the 13th March Khaparde was ready

to go away. A person who had seen such wonderful powers of Baba and noted how anxious Baba was to help him on to the highest by the use of his wonderful powers would surely have been anxious to meet Baba again in the flesh, or after Mahasamadhi of Baba, to commune with him in the Spirit. But strangest of all, Khaparde never cared to visit Baba in the flesh except when B. G. Tilak went to see him on the 19th of May 1917, and then stayed with Baba just for a few hours and never thought of visiting him again. As for the enjoyment of Baba's help, after Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918, we have ample evidence to show that others were able to enjoy the same. But in the case of G. S. Khaparde, there is not the faintest suggestion that he ever cared to develop contact with Baba in his spiritual condition as *Apantaratma*. The reason is patent. The world, world, world, is ever with us and will not leave us, or rather to put it more bluntly, we will not leave the world and consequently the world will not leave us. It is a vicious circle never ending. That is the chief lesson that one derives from a study of this diary. Yet the reader must not fancy that Sri Khaparde's moral or spiritual position was low. His was a bright, high position as understood in orthodox circles and he achieved great success in several walks of life even after changing his original political faith at least as understood by others.

So far as services to Baba are concerned, we may add one more to the list of services. Perhaps Khaparde was instrumental in drawing Bala Gangadhar Tilak to visit Baba in 1917. This undoubtedly added to the glamour and prestige of Baba's durbar. If Khaparde's visit to Baba gave Baba some prestige, the visit of B.G. Tilak added to it a hundred times more. Unfortunately, the pity of the situation is this. In the relevant solitary page of the diary dated 19-5-1917 Khaparde notes it as the date of Tilak's visit without mentioning how and why Tilak made that visit. That information we derive from other sources and that is valuable. Tilak was far more advanced in his religious studies than Khaparde and Tilak's Gita Rahasya is highly valued and Baba himself showed his regard for it by asking one of his devotees who had that book in hand to go on reading it. When such a person visited Baba, it is worthwhile noting that his visit was not made for spiritual reasons. Tilak knew that Sai Baba's powers were vast and that

he knew the future and controlled men's minds. But the reason that made him approach Baba in 1917 was only to find out whether Baba approved of the lines on which he was working for national liberation and when he put that question to Baba, the latter studiously avoided giving him a direct answer. Baba told him, 'You are getting old. You require rest. Why don't you take rest?' This was very significant. Tilak was soon to pass away (in July 1920) and it was high time for him to retire from his political activities and develop his spiritual ones. As for the political aim, nothing more was wanted on the part of Tilak. Work on Tilak's lines had to end. Very soon the national work of reaching Independence was undertaken by a person who was not merely highly spiritually advanced but one whose method of activities, political and spiritual, ensured certainty of success, through the aid of not merely human beings inhabiting the country regardless of their distinctions of race, caste, or colour, but also through the aid of other nationalities and of God. Mahatma Gandhi was coming into the field and his lines were approved of both by Hindus and Muhammadans and his chances of success were therefore indisputably superior to Tilak's chances. Mahatma Gandhi's international reputation was a great factor in helping on the final development; it must be remembered that pressure was brought to bear on Britain in the great war of Hitler against Britain to demolish her empire in India. The sympathies of Russia, America and other great powers were with India, and Churchill was being pressed to liberate India in spite of his distinct dislike to liberate India. Hence, it was Baba's power to foresee the shape that Indian politics was assuming in the hands of the next great leader, who may be justly styled the Father of Indian Independence. That evidently made Baba give the above answer to Tilak. Tilak could not see the future but Baba could. Tilak could safely retire leaving the field entirely open to Mahatma Gandhi and himself concentrate upon his own spiritual interest and upon other religious work for the benefit of the country and humanity. This is not disclosed at all in the diary for, as already remarked, Khaparde's diary is several times more notable for its omissions than for its contents. All the same, the diary is of very great value to devotees who must be immensely thankful to G.S. Khaparde for maintaining it

and allowing it to be published. (G.S.K. 27-8-1854—1-7-1938). His marble statue was unveiled on 2-6-1954 by the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

CHAPTER VIII

Succession to Sai's Seat

The question has several times been raised whether Sri Sai Baba arranged for and left a successor to his position. He was Guru on certain lines to vast numbers of people who looked to him at Shirdi for governing their entire lives. Naturally one would expect that such a person with such vast and mighty power would provide his devotees with some means for their future guidance. Usually a Guru forms a Math or an Ashram and trains up, some time before he passes away, a pupil and even introduces him to those dependent on that Math or Ashram. This has been done time and again in various Maths (following the example of Yuvaraja being put in charge of the kingdom by the retiring Raja). This is necessary in the case of Rajas who leave vast possessions and who have definite policies to follow in respect of friends, enemies, neutrals, etc. In the case of several Maths and Ashrams, they are really similar to kingdoms, because they own properties and have their own policies in respect of various classes of their dependents, followers, and adherents and their own philosophical tenets to propagate. In respect of Sri Sai Baba, however, the most noticeable point is that he never tolerated the idea of forming a Math or an Ashram and treating himself as the head of it. In the exuberant enthusiasm of some devotees, since the arrival of Radhakrishna Aji in 1908, Sri Sai Baba, much against his will, was made to have a durbar with all the pomp and paraphernalia of kingship and with some properties at least which are necessitated by such pomp, etc. There was, therefore, a set of properties resembling regalia. But Baba's attitude towards them was not that of an owner rejoicing in the possession or proprietorship of his properties. On the other hand, he was '*Alipta*' a real fakir in regal roles. He persistently declined to put on a crown, to put on costly robes, and to get upon any palanquin, especially a silver palanquin, or have anything to do with silver articles. He had an utter disregard for wealth. Wealth was necessary for society no doubt, but, in his condition, his necessities of life were sufficiently provided by

his bhiksha dharma, that is true *fakiri*. He went out and stood in four or five places in the village, outside houses and shouted out, '*Pora Pori*', that is, 'boys and girls! *Roti Dhal lav*', that is, bring bread, etc. People from a number of houses invariably provided him with pieces of flat cakes (which he would carry in his cloth) and poured liquids containing lentils, etc., all together in one 'tumbrel' or tin pot. These formed his meal up to the last day of his life on earth.

Occasionally when he was too ill himself to go, he commissioned some devotee present to go out and do this Bhiksha dharma, the begging for him, and the naivedya was brought. For instance, Vaman Rao Prangovind Patil, B.A., LL.B., and G. G. Narke, M.A., M.Sc., were sent out by him to go and do the begging for him when he was unable to go out. Therefore, there was absolutely no need for him to keep any cash or buy anything for his food, and as for his bed, that was on the ground first and later he lay on a rough and cheap mattress called Gadi, with a few clothes spread thereon. These were all the minimal needs, and Baba had no other needs. Therefore Baba had no property and felt no necessity for any property. Yet devotees insisted on getting a horse, a car (ratha), silver palanquin with silver ornaments fixed to them, silver sticks to be carried in front of him, mace, whisks fitted on to silver sticks, etc. Polished tiles and chandeliers, artificial garden and Moons were used to decorate his chavadi, and thus he was made to appear like an aristocrat or royal person. Finally to oblige his overenthusiastic devotees, he fell into their humour, and then money was essential to run a royal court, a big Maharaja's durbar, and he began asking for large sums of money from those who would give it and who were even anxious to give it. Thus his monthly income exceeded that of a Provincial Governor. These would constitute his property but his vairagya came in the way. Every morning he would begin with zero and everyday he would scatter away the entire collection the same evening, and nothing would remain fit to be called his property. He would not have a bank balance or investment on mortgages, etc., and there was no such thing as a possession or property for him. So, there was no necessity for him to leave an heir or successor as kings and several maths do. When he passed away, he left only Rs. 16 in his pocket just enough to

purchase a coffin and bury his body. So far as the *Regalia* were concerned, an Association took charge of them in 1916 on the death of Radhakrishna, and Baba did not own them or care for them. When some silver horses attached to the palanquin were stolen and devotees complained of it to Baba, Baba's remark was 'Why was not the whole palanquin stolen?'

Some people naturally thought that he must have a successor to carry on his tradition.

Once upon a time Sai Baba seems to have had an idea that somebody might be found to carry on his Guru Parampara. Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe in his statement says that some people asked him, 'Baba, are you going to leave the world without entrusting your full powers and possessions to anyone?' Then, according to Sathe, Baba's reply was, 'What? Will there not be some man coming?' That is all. That coupled with Baba's treatment of Sri Kasinath Upasani Maharaj from 1911 onwards made some people believe at that time that Sri Sai Baba hoped that Kasinath Maharaj or Upasani Baba could be developed into his successor, having all his nature and powers, and being able to give all the help to persons accustomed to get their help from Sri Sai Baba. Sri Sai seems to have hoped no doubt in 1911-12 that Sri Kasinath would receive the full impress of Sai personality by perfect laya or merger in him and that on the expiry of four years from Sravan or July 1911, that is, by July 1915, he would be completely transformed into God, filled with Khandoba's grace, absolutely rid of his (Kasinath's) old vasanas, and perfectly prepared to continue Sai's work. So, Sai said, to him, 'Do nothing', (which means, 'Be receptive'). 'Stay in Khandoba's temple doing nothing for four years. Then you will be the recipient of Khandoba's full grace, that is, you will get all his powers, and Shama will come and pull you out of Khandoba's solitude and I will place you in the open. That is, your divinity will be recognised by all and every one will come and worship you as the Gurudeva¹. That might have been Sai Baba's hope in the beginning at any rate. For Baba's Guruparampara the sishya has to absorb the Gurudeva's soul into himself by concentrated love forgetting the entire world beside. This was possible for Sai at his early age of five when he contacted his Gurudeva and continued to

serve him for 10 or 12 years with concentrated love. Baba says that he loved nothing in the world except the Guru and if the Guru was not there, he wondered what his eyes were for. That is a romantic attachment to the Guru and an ability to banish all worldly thought unconnected with the Guru. But this was not possible for any person other than Baba, and especially for persons who have already dipped themselves into the world deep enough.

In the case of Kasinath Maharaj, he came into contact with Sai Baba for such training, only at the age of 41. He had already had two wives, was living with a third wife and had developed disease. And he was anxious for the cure of the disease to resume his domestic life with her wife and continue his position in his family. He had his attachments and there was no particular reason why he should not have his worldly affections. The idea of being completely absorbed in God and forgetting all things except the Guru all day long was totally foreign to Upasani Baba as to so many other aspirants and sadhakas. It was to some extent adopted by him during the three years of his stay with Baba, for then, whatever sufferings he had only made him think of Baba, and in any case Baba was very close to him, and Baba looked after his safety, and there was plenty of mental and unseen contact with Sai Baba. ²¹Kasinath himself had been ordered not to go and meet Sai Baba in person, but there were many persons like Chidambaram Pilai, Kamalakar Dixit, and others who went both to Sai Baba and to Upasani Baba. He was constantly hearing about Sai Baba, and thinking naturally only of Baba when at Shirdi. Other objects were kept out of his mind by life at Shirdi especially under Sai's care. So, to some extent, his mind was directed to Sai Baba, and Baba used every opportunity for developing

²¹ * BCS 40. Night and day. I think and think of my people. I con their names over and over again.

To S.B. Dhumal.— Bhau. the whole of last night I had no sleep. I lay thinking and thinking of you.

At every step, I have to take care of you. Else, what will happen to you, God knows!

Kasinath's soul even through his misfortunes. However, the course prescribed by Sai Baba, namely, thinking only of Sai Baba, was not fully possible even at Shirdi. Kasinath's contact with outside persons could never be obliterated.

Mischievous young persons tortured him. Jealous persons were scandalizing him. A few admirers came and paid their homage to him. He told stories to some of them, and lectured to some others. He kept on his old intellectual lines of advance and wrote out 17 excellent Sanskrit stanzas in 1912 in praise of Sai Baba. He kept up his intellectuality and his learning as important assets. For Sai's course, intellectuality was not wanted. It was an obstacle. One must forget that he is learned and a master of Sanskrit or other language, which would all raise his Egoism, *Abhimana*. One must begin with oneself as a thorough zero, and think of, and work in respect of, Baba and nothing but Baba. This was achieved by Baba at Selu but was not possible in the case of Sri Upasani Maharaj at Shirdi (and was totally impossible after escaping from Shirdi). He could not forget his sorrows and think of Sai Baba in such a way as to deaden his feelings towards harassing events and incidents even when living at Shirdi.

In order, perhaps, to help him to regain some degree of assurance in the midst of all his troubles and fear of approaching death, Sai Baba started Upasani's worship on the 15th July 1913. He sent Chandra Bai Borkar to Khandoba's temple to worship Upasani in exactly the same way in which she and others worshipped Sai Baba himself. So, she brought her plateful of puja *samans*, and started doing puja to Kasinath. She pulled out his leg, wanted to clean it, paint it with turmeric, etc., and place sandal paste, etc. But Upasani objected. He did not want the worship. He wished to be left alone and he had no idea as to the real significance of Baba's sending that lady to worship him. The significance of that puja was that from that day onwards, Kasinath was fully earmarked as a Guru to be worshipped by people and to have no more sense of ownership--or anything personal in his body or reputation. He existed or should exist like Gods, images, etc. for the public and only for the public. It is with that

idea that Chandra Bai was sent up. When Kasinath objected, the lady, however, with her strong hands pulled out his legs, did the puja for them, waved a camphor lamp before him, carried a cup of milk to his mouth as naivedya. etc., and told him that his body was not his but belonged to the public. This cup he dashed down and angrily forbade her from coming again to worship him. That no doubt stopped the puja for a time. Very few persons at Shirdi were as sincerely and earnestly anxious to worship Upasani as Chandra Bai did. But a few did exist, and a few of them did go to Kasinath at Khandoba's temple and tried to worship him. But as fate would have it, Nanavali, a sturdy half-crazy ascetic, used to come and disturb the puja. When others threw flowers at Upasani, he threw dirt. When others offered stotra, he offered abuse, insult, and vilification, and once even tied up Upasani with a rope to a pillar, and danced and romped about, treating Upasani with utter contempt. This was all gall and wormwood to Sri Upasani. He might not care very much for worship. But he resented very much his being humiliated in the presence of his devotees. There was however no way of escape. Nanavali was a sturdy stout person ready to do violence to any one on the slightest provocation. Nanavali regarded Upasani with the same feelings as several of the Shirdi villagers, namely, that he was bringing discredit and danger to Sri Sai Baba, and Nanavali very much wished to get rid of Upasani (as he wanted to get rid of H.V. Sathe) from Shirdi. And it must be admitted that he was successful in achieving his object in both cases. The pestering which Kasinath had from Nanavali and the Muhammadan boys and others was so unbearable that in July 1914, one year after his puja was started, Kasinath could not any longer endure his stay at Shirdi. and he determined to cut short his serving Baba at Shirdi. What was miraculously started in June-July 1911 came to a very abrupt and unfortunate end in the sishya's running away from his Guru without even going to see him. If he had gone to see him, he might have been prevented from leaving Shirdi in 1914, just as he was prevented in 1911. For one reason or another, Kasinath avoided seeing Sai Baba, and with the help of Dr. Chidambaram Pilfai and his friend Dr. Ganpat Rao of Sindhe, effected his escape (nocturnally) from Shirdi and stayed away for over a year visiting various places.

Once he left Shirdi, his thoughts and plans were all his own. They were not directed to Sai Baba, or by Baba, and his own original ideas were running on lines totally different from Sai Baba's, and they were running away at a tangent from Sai Baba's²².

So, after July 1914, Sri Kasinath Upasani Maharaj visited Sindhe, Nagpur, and Kharagpur, and there achieved fame through his moral tales, pravachanas, and by his strict vairagya. The seeds sown in July 1913 of his worship by Chandra Bai bore ample fruit in 1915 at Kharagpur where hundreds were swarming to listen to him and especially to his tales, after Christmas. He was fast ripening into a Guruship of his own. He had developed several powers when under Sai's influence, and they were further developing as time went on. He became a Sadguru to a large number of people from 1915 onwards. But that Gurudom was not a succession to Sai Baba. The lines of thought, the lines of dealing and the nature of the two personalities, were markedly different²³ as Upasani had cut himself away before the full period of time necessary for him to become Sai like. This is what one is compelled to infer from the facts known to us.

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- ²² especially in such vital mailers as living with women and storing property. Sai Baba avoided both- U. Maharaj stuck to both.

²³ *for instance, the thorough blotting of his reputation by the campaign of Divekar Sastri through Kirloskar magazine would have been impossible if Sai Baba's *anasakti* or avoidance of having any store of wealth or women as his had been persistently carried out by Sri Upasani after he left Sai. It was his accumulation of wealth and women that were the chief grounds of numbers hating or despising him, and it is these that resulted in the total loss of popularity or esteem after 1935. It is his persistency getting girls in 1932 by marrying them to an image held in his hand that was the immediate provocation for the passing of Bombay Devadasi Act 1935 forbidding such marriages.

But we need not dogmatise, it is enough to note that Sai did not state to the public when they asked him, what they were to do after his demise, that Upasani Baba would be his successor. On the other hand, he said to Damia (Damodar Rasane) and Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad, 'Think of me, and I am there'. He said, 'Mother, I am not going away. In any place where you think of me, I am there'. ("I shall be active even from the tomb"). That is how Baba arranged for the continued protection of his devotees, not by leaving a successor but by continuing his personality and allowing himself to contact devotees on occasions of their prayer and even otherwise. Whether people think of him or not, he, as the all-pervading soul, is and would be ever watching and guiding his bhaktas especially. Sai Baba identified himself with Allah quite correctly, because he was merged in Allah and had no interests of his own. That is the only way in which we can contact Allah, that is, through a person merged in Allah. He can act also as Khandoba, Lakshminarayan, Vittoba, etc., which are all individual facets of Allah (*Angani-anya devatah Tait. U*). As Baba himself told the Rohilla, Pandharpur Vittobha and the other Hindu Gods are all Allah (BCS 60).

In this matter, Sri M.B. Rege gives us the correct clue as to how to treat Baba. When Baba was in the body, his connection with the body gave a colouring to our notions of his personality. His personality was connected with the particular Baba body and gave the people the idea that he was a Muhammadan personality they were dealing with, with such and such peculiarities and such and such merits, etc. But when once he left the body, he was no longer to be identified with that body. He had receded into the unknown, the unseen, the beyond; and thereafter had no peculiarities, no particularities, no particular merits or demerits. He was merely God. So, Mr. M.B. Rege says, 'Now, I think of him only as God'. This view of Mr. M.B. Rege is widely prevalent amongst the bhaktas that contacted or do contact Baba. In the case of those who contact Baba subsequent to his Mahasamadhi, it is only as God that they come to him. They are in distress, and they want relief. They cry unto him, and they get relief. That is, He is the divine that protects them. Therefore, it is easy for persons contacting Baba after his Mahasamadhi to deal with him as God. The fame of his deeds,

conveyed through innumerable experiences, during his life in the flesh, tends to confirm this idea, for, even during his fleshy life, Baba had said, 'I am Allah; I am Khandoba, Lakshminarayan, Vittoba, Maruti,' etc., and had shown himself in those forms.

So far as powers are concerned, Baba's powers are seen to be as divine as that of any other forms of God. As for his divine mercy, kindness and love, they are so widespread, so just, and so great as to fully justify the application of the term 'Divine' to him. Every experience of every devotee that comes to him now makes him feel that he is dealing with Divinity, a good Guardian Angel, or Ishta Devata, if he likes to term him so. So Baba's assurance of the continuance of his protecting personality after Mahasamadhi (BCS 47-52) is a sufficient reason why Baba did not mind the absence of any person to get into his Gadi at Shirdi and continue his Guruparampara there. It is not necessary to discuss the claims of X, Y or Z, who occasionally put forward the claim that he is the successor of Sai Baba. A few of such claims seem to have been put forward. But they were all pooh-poohed and there is no set of Sai Bhaktas that we are aware of who are deliberately saying and holding to the position that X, Y or Z was the successor to Baba's Gadi. That, however, is a different matter from the question whether there is now any living person who has to be identified with Sai Baba. Just as the Avatars left Nava Nathas as their representatives on earth, sometimes people come forward and say 'I am an *Avatar* of Sai Baba'. This sort of claim has been put forward in various places at various times. It is not necessary to narrate all of them even if that were possible. But it might be stated that to the knowledge of this author himself three or four came forward with such claims. For instance a young man at Karur professed to be Sai Baba, and was attracting to himself worship and money. But this was soon put a stop to and the author discovered, after personally meeting the Karur boy, the absolute hollowness of his claim. Some others also put forward similar claims. A girl at Bangalore put forward such a claim, and the author, on seeing her, discovered the worthlessness of the claim. It is not necessary to mention other cases. But these have occasionally been mentioned in the columns of the 'Sai Sudha' or other papers and invariably

on investigation, it has been noted that any person, claiming to be Sai Baba, does not show even a very small fraction of Baba's nature. Mere power to read thought, mere clairvoyance, mere production of articles from empty box or bands and mere devotion to Sai or God, will not constitute one into an Avatar of Sai.

So, we might conclude this chapter by saying that Sai left no successor to his seat, that there was no seat to succeed to (as God's seat can never be vacant) and that there is no person living who can be recognised by all as having the entire Sai spirit or Soul in his body, that is, who can be regarded as the Avatar of Sai. That question arises because of the statements of Sai Baba to several of his devotees. When Sri M.B. Rege, Master Tarkhad, and others were requesting Sai to protect them in future lives, Sai said that he was going to be reborn birth after birth. For instance, for the three more births necessary for Master to achieve liberation, he would be reborn and be with him. He made a similar promise to M. B. Rege and also to others. Kaka Dixit (H.S. Dixit) seems to have said, 'Baba said that he would appear suddenly as a boy of eight and show himself, that is, his powers and nature'. We have not till now discovered any boy of eight, who had Baba's wonderful nature and powers. Even if he should take birth somewhere, his *Apantaratma Rupa* is still there and is still helping. Therefore the question of our finding any person now who is the Avatar of Baba need not be further discussed. It is sufficient to say that those who are anxious to benefit by Sai Baba will be very wise if they confine themselves to the well-known history of Sai Baba; and if they adopt the usual and well-known methods for contacting Sai Baba of Shirdi, who is now no other than God himself, they would succeed, and they need not be panting to discover whether there is any Avatar of Sai Baba or any one who is entitled to call himself the successor to Sai Baba for the Shirdi Gadi. *God's seat we repeat is never vacant.* Sai Baba was and is God always being immersed in the God idea, and carrying out God's lilas when he was in the flesh. His Ritambhara Prajna or Antarjñana, as it was called, his control over men's minds and material objects at any distance, his power to appear and do anything anywhere, can only be called divine. These powers we read of in his lilas before 1918, and we read of the same also after 1918. Sri Sai Baba's

kindness in stirring up people's minds to contact him now seem to extend itself in various places in remarkable forms and ways which are not always understood by us, but which are to spread faith in Baba. What Sri Baba did at Coimbatore in 1943, at Ramachandrapuram in 1950-54, at Ahmedabad in 1953, and at Thotapalli Hills in 1954 and in so many other places, have been brought to public notice and have greatly increased the numbers of Sai bhaktas. These recent lilas (about which further details will be given in a later chapter) have strengthened people's faith in Baba and are bound soon to make Sai faith reach all the distant corners of this country, a faith that deals with Sai Baba as God and not as a human being holding a position that has to be filled up by a successor.

(End of Part II)